Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss “Semites of the desert among themselves”, 1937.

original: Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß „Semiten der Wüste unter sich“, 1937.
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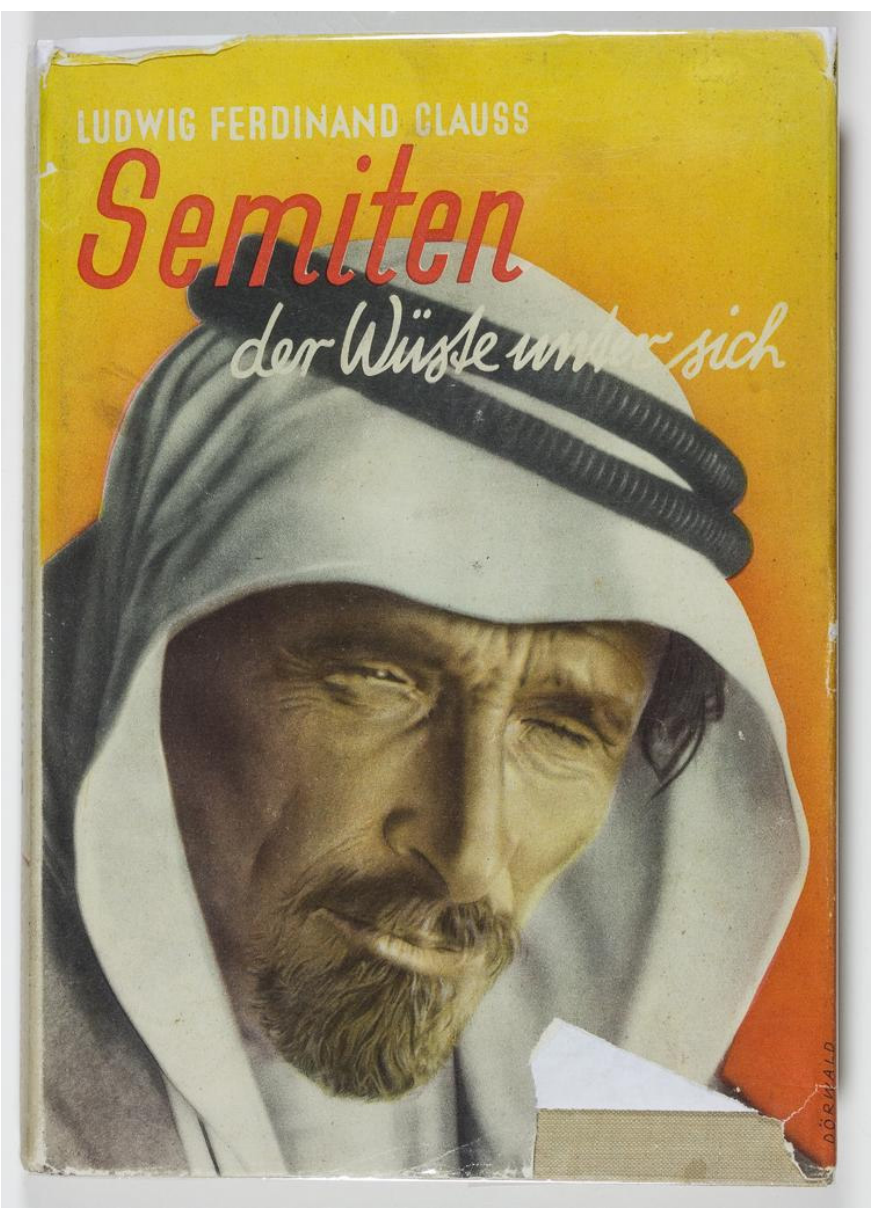

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To my readers

More than two years have passed since the Gutenberg Book Guild approached me with the request to create a significantly expanded edition of my book "As a Bedouin Among Bedouins," which was published in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1933 and 1934. The publisher kindly agreed immediately, but my work in service of the new Reich and, ultimately, my teaching position at the Berlin University demanded my undivided attention and left no room for further work. This is why I can only present this new book on the Semites today.

Now that the Book Guild has published my book "Race and Soul" in three editions, I may hope that this has prepared the ground for examining that world of the Arsemite, so completely foreign to us. It is of particular importance to us because it has repeatedly and decisively influenced our own psychological history from an early age—often clearly recognizable and often almost imperceptible. We purify ourselves when we recognize what is foreign as foreign.

Summer 1937.

L. F. C.

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1. David and Goliath, or The Figure as Destiny

This was what caused such a strange sense of calm for some of us adolescents back then: that during lessons in biblical history, we couldn't always see things the way the teacher wanted them to be seen, according to his binding precepts. And when these stories told of two people quarreling with each other, we didn't always feel on the side that

biblical history and the teacher were taking. For example, we read: "The Philistines were on a mountain on the far side, and the Israelites on a mountain on this side, so that between them was the valley." Then a giant named Goliath stepped forward from the Philistine ranks... six cubits and a handbreadth tall... the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the iron of his spear was six hundred shekels of iron... And he stood and called to the army of Israel and said to them, "Choose one of yourselves to come down to me. If he is able to fight against me and defeats me, then we will be your servants. But if I am able to fight against him and defeat him, then you shall be our servants." And again the Philistine cried out, "I have defied the army of Israel this day. Now give me a man so that we may fight together!"

When Saul and all Israel heard this speech of the Philistine, they were horrified and greatly afraid.

Now David was the son of a man from Bethlehem in Judah; His name was Jesse, and he had eight sons… Jesse's three oldest sons had gone to war under Saul… David was the youngest. David often went home from Saul's court to tend his father's sheep in Bethlehem. But the Philistine came morning and evening and stood guard for forty days.

Once Jesse said to his son David, "Take for your brothers… some of this roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread… and these ten fresh cheeses. Take them to the captain and ask how your brothers are and let them give you a pledge."… Early the next morning, David left the sheep with [8] a shepherd, loaded them up, and set out on his journey... and ran to the army and went in and greeted his brothers. And while he was still talking with them, behold, the giant named Goliath came out... from the Philistine army and said the same things as before, and David heard it. But when the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him and were greatly afraid. One of the Israelites cried out, "Have you seen the man who is coming up here? He is coming up to mock Israel. Whoever kills him, the king will make very rich and will give him his daughter and will exempt his father's house from taxes in Israel." Then David said to the men who were with him, "What then will be done to the one who kills this Philistine and removes the disgrace from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should mock the army of the living God?" Then the people said to him as before, "This is what will happen to him who kills him."

But when David's eldest brother heard him speaking to the men, he became angry with David and cried out, "Why have you come here, and to whom have you given his few sheep there in the pasture? I know your insolence and your wicked nature—you came here to watch the war!"

David answered, "What have I done now? It was only a word." And he turned from him to another man and asked him the same thing, and the people answered him as they had the first time.

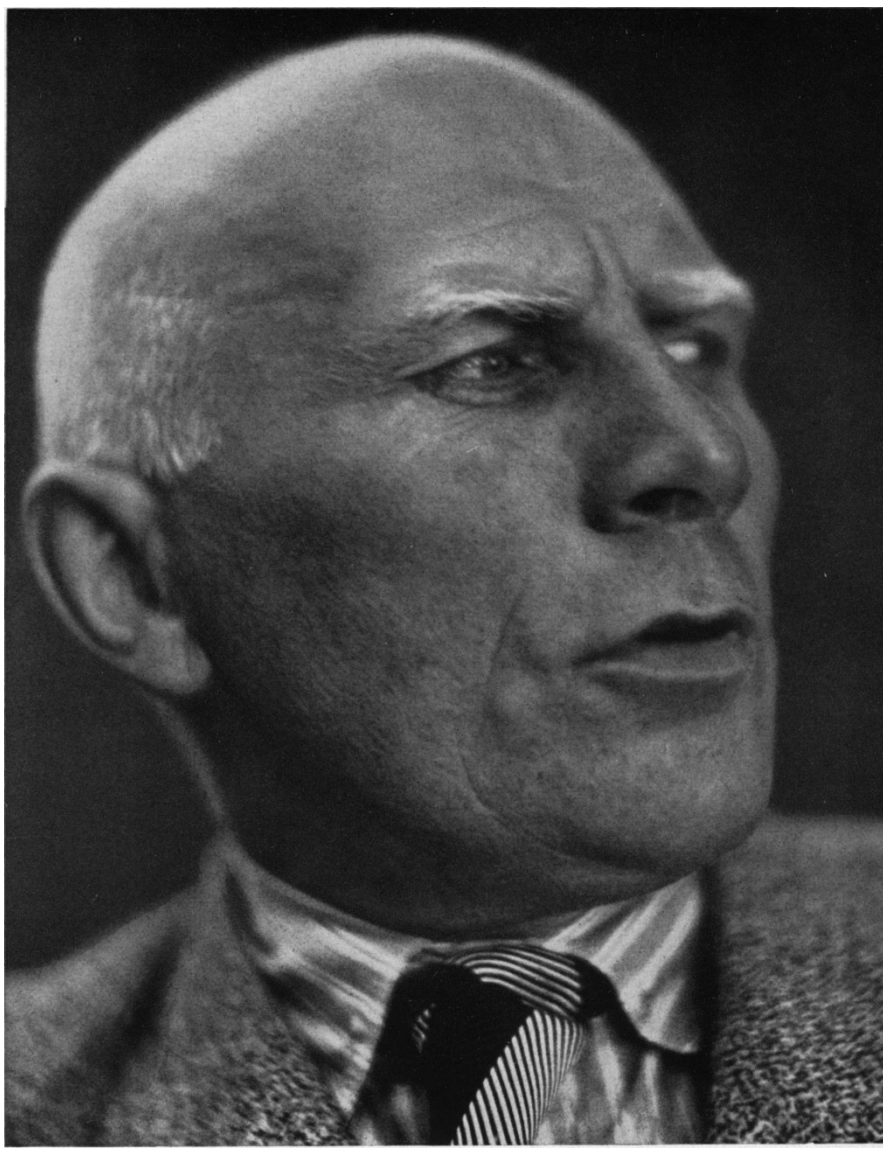
When it became known what David had said, it also reached Saul, and he summoned him. David said to Saul, "Lord, do not let your heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with the Philistine… Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I ran after it and struck it down and rescued it from its mouth. And when it attacked me, I seized it by its beard and struck it down and killed it… So shall this Philistine, the circumcised one, be like one of them, for he has dishonored the host of the living God…

And Saul said to David, "Go, the Lord will be with you!" And Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head and fitted him with breastplate and strapped his sword over it. David struggled to walk in it, for he had never tried it before. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk in it, for I am not used to it." Then they took off his armor again, and he took his staff in his hand and picked out five smooth stones from the valley and put them in his shepherd's bag... and took the sling in his hand and went forward against the Philistine... The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with a stick?" and cursed David by his gods... But David said: "You come against me with sword, [9] spear and shield.

[8]/1

I. Bedouin camp in the stony desert during the rainy season

[8]/2

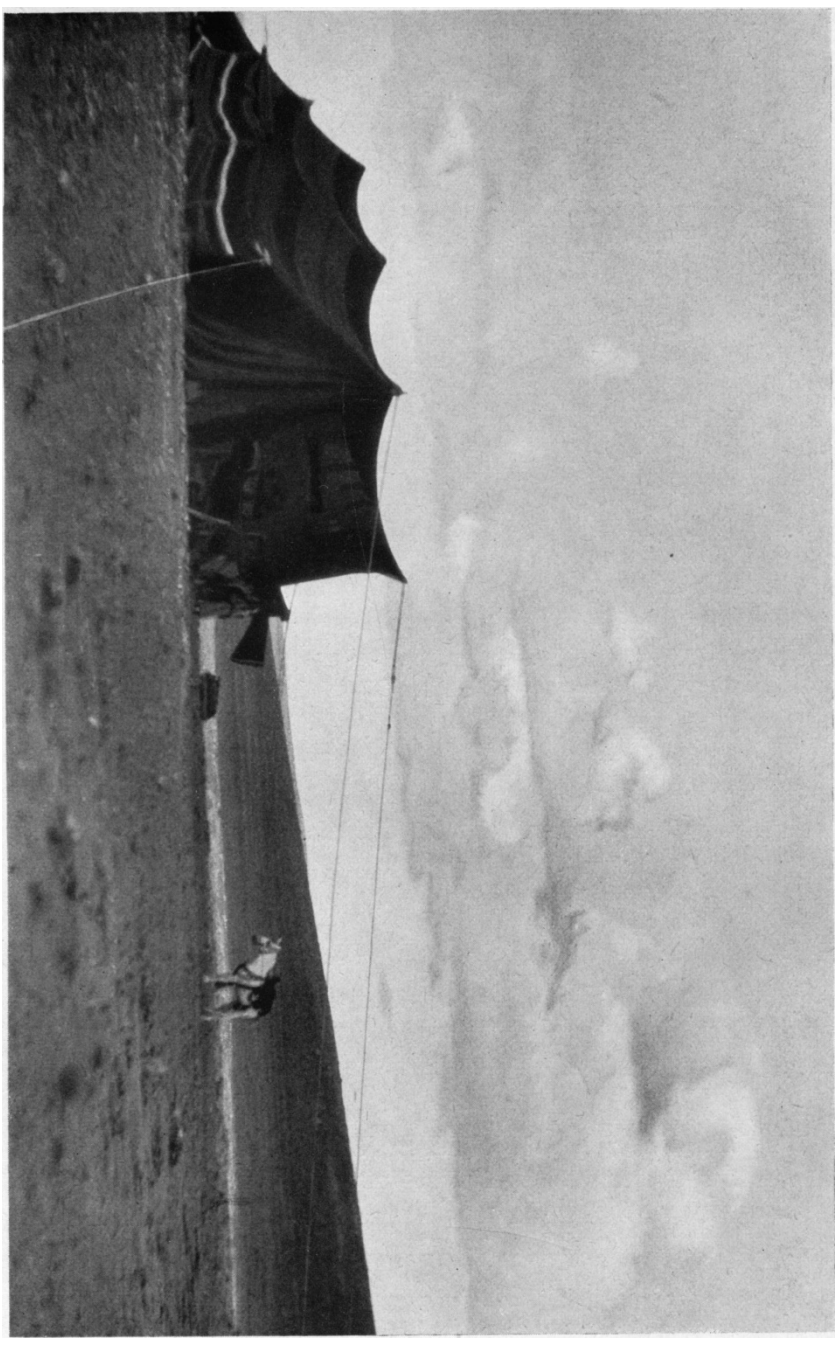


II. Large-scale farmer from Dithmarschen. Features of both Phalian and Nordic races. "Goliath"

[8]/3

III. Shepherd from the Beni Sachr tribe. Essentially desert-dwelling features. "David"

[8]/4



IV. The Sheikh's tent

[9] But I meet you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ... But this day the Lord delivers you into my hand ... so that all the world may know that there is a God in Israel...

Then David put his hand in his pocket and took a stone from it and hurled it and struck the Philistine on his forehead, so that the stone entered his forehead and he fell to the ground on his face. (1 Samuel 1:49)

So much for the story of the fall of the "giant" Goliath. It was expected of us students, as a matter of course, that we inwardly side with David, who at the time of that story was already the anointed one of the Lord, and that we rejoiced with the armies of Israel at the fall of the "giant." That, after all, was the purpose of all this instruction in biblical history. Most of us didn't think about it any further, but simply ignored it. But

our inner stance wasn't what was expected of us. Even though we tried, our feelings decided otherwise. And much later, when I thought back on this story, I felt embarrassed; and I know that others felt the same way. A lingering aftertaste remains, clearly indicating that something—at least to our senses—doesn't quite add up in this story. What could be the reason for that?

What's being recounted is a duel between two armies, the kind we usually find in the early history of Indo-European peoples. Just as the mighty warrior Goliath does here, the Homeric heroes challenged each other to single combat, and the Gothic heroes Hildebrand and Hadubrand in the Old High German Hildebrandslied also challenge each other to a duel between two armies. The battle with weapons was often preceded by a battle of words, where both opponents boasted of their lineage and their own deeds. The opponents "measured" each other: that was the purpose of such combat. However, it is essential for such a measurement that it be carried out with a uniform standard. Only things that are of the same kind, or at least believe themselves to be the same, compete against each other. The weapons must be identical or at least of the same kind, and so on.

[10] The use of these weapons: combat, especially single combat, was governed by strict rules to which both opponents submitted. Violating the code of combat was sacrilege and worse than defeat, for it extinguished the honor of the offender. To fall honorably is no terror for combatants of this kind; for everyone, the day comes when they fall. If he fell as a hero, then the glory of his deeds outlives him: the hero is dead, but the honor lives on. Honest combat according to equal standards and custom is something that has been experienced as a value throughout all early Indo-European history, even as a supreme value, for it leads, in the style of those people, to a festive level of life and is therefore worth the sacrifice of one's own life. But everything depends on the preservation of the "honest" code of combat. To violate the code of combat means to lose honor: then victory is not victory, but something worse than death.

But according to which custom is the single combat fought here between the light young shepherd and the armored heavy warrior? The giant believes he has the right to despise the little man because the latter is incapable of measuring himself by the same standard, namely, the standard by which the giant himself measures himself. This standard is the only standard for him; he knows no other. And it seems that it is recognized all around by every warrior as the standard by which the prevailing custom is determined. Not only the Philistines consider this custom valid, but also "the battle lines of Yahweh." Otherwise, during the forty days in which the giant summons the enemy's best warriors to single combat from morning till night, someone might have already done what the shepherd later does: treacherously fell the mighty Philistine from a safe distance with a sling. But the warriors know no other way than to fight with equal weapons. At first, they are annoyed by the little shepherd who has come along, who knows nothing of war: his own brother insults him. Those who cannot even bear equal weapons have no right to fight against the strong – as long as the same standards apply to both sides. "It's unacceptable," think the seasoned warriors.

[11] But David, unaccustomed to these established customs, makes a discovery that the warriors, bound by learned military customs, are themselves incapable of, though this does not prevent them from subsequently endorsing it. It can be summed up in the simple formula: It is possible after all. Of course—it is only possible if the established custom, the common standard, is violated. The awareness of established custom is something rooted in history and thus ultimately in character and blood. In this particular case, everything depends on whether David's violation of custom can be justified before the historical consciousness of his people and contemporaries, before the community of Israel.

David states that the Philistine has "disgraced the army of the living God." The facts of this accusation are established by the narrative. The Philistine challenged the enemy army to send him an equal opponent for single combat; but no one like him was found in the enemy army. Instead of sending a man who could match him, Saul and all Israel were horrified and terrified. So the Philistine mocked them and provoked them for forty days.

The mockery and provocation do not justify violating the “honorable” customs of war, for they themselves fall within the bounds of established custom. Therefore, the fact that an enemy army is mocked cannot justify a measure that defies sacred military customs and that no one expects, not even those being mocked. David’s reasoning aims at something else. He does not say: the Philistine has disgraced “us” or “our army,” but: “the army of the living God.” He touches upon something that constitutes the core of his people's historical consciousness: not being a nation among nations, fielding an army like other nations, but a special people, distinct from all others: the people of Yahweh, the "living God." Israel and Yahweh are one: whoever disgraces this people disgraces Yahweh through them. Israel, as Yahweh's army, cannot tolerate a disgrace of Yahweh. What the Philistine does is now no longer considered war.

[12] The act is seen not as a necessary act, but as a sacrilege against Yahweh. The entire event shifts its inner focus; it is perceived with a different awareness. The opponent's right to equality is denied without warning. It is not a duel that David now enters, but an execution carried out on behalf of Yahweh, the violated one. Yahweh has judged the Philistine and delivered him into David's hands. Thus, David no longer acts as an opponent in conflict, but in the office of executioner.

In this consideration, it is irrelevant whether it was indeed David himself to whom this applies, or another man with a different name, but from that same people of Israel. Israel acts through David; only Israel is concerned, therefore everything remains the same, even if perhaps someone else actually stood in David's place. (In 2 Samuel, verse 19, another man, named Elchanan, is mentioned as Goliath's slayer.) And even this is a secondary question here: whether the narrative of the fall of the Philistine Goliath is to be considered historical in the strict sense or "only" a legend, whether it faithfully reflects the way of thinking and experiencing Israel in that early period or in a somewhat later one. Legends often provide deeper insight into the nature of a people and their self-image than verifiable history; for legend is not fairy tale or fable, but usually nothing other than history refined through poetry, and thus says more than the latter. Legends present a picture of the people as they should be according to their own historical character.

Therefore, the event that ends with the fall of the mighty warrior is historical in a profound and strict sense. A “hero” who lives in the awareness of his own strength and relies on nothing but the awareness of superior power seeks in the world he finds himself an equal. He doesn't want cheap victories over the weak—he has no shortage of those—but an opponent worth measuring himself against. But in the realm he inhabits, such opponents are nowhere to be found—not a single one. (Only among the people to whom he counts himself, the Philistines, are there three other “giants” like him.)

[13] For forty days he shouted his longing for an equal enemy across the valley to the enemy army. And finally, a small fellow came along with a staff and a shepherd's bag. It seemed: surely the experienced warrior must now notice something. This unexpected opponent could only be mad or—a traitor. But the "giant" noticed nothing. He only saw his hope for someone his equal dashed, and he cursed the little fellow, whose mere appearance he considered a mockery. For him, battle was a supreme moment, a festively heightened experience of his own strength—but only if the opponent fought in the same style of displaying power. And now this little shepherd with the staff! And while the mighty warrior was thus lost in thoughts of strength, the smooth stone struck him in the forehead.

The inner attitude of the giant hero was alien and incomprehensible to David, but he knew it from the outside and expected it. In this, David is superior to his opponent. For the mighty man, it is inconceivable that someone who openly confronts him in battle could meet him with the inner conviction of an executioner. In his mind, this is cowardly betrayal. And his way of thinking forbids him from even considering such a thing—his gaze is fixed on an opponent of equal stature, from whom he must expect equal action: therein lies his greatness, or—if one wishes to see things through David's eyes—his folly. David is unaware of the blood-blooded longing of one who cannot exist without radiating his power into the world, and who needs something opposite him—be it blocks to be stacked or an enemy with whom to measure himself. He is unaware that a person can be rooted within himself, in the unconditional awareness of his own strength. And if he were to suspect it, he would see nothing but a sacrilege. David's strength lies entirely in the mission given to him by another: Yahweh. For him, fighting is not a value in itself, not a task that demands to be shaped according to its own inherent law. Perhaps, for him, fighting is even inherently an Abel, only gaining a derivative value when fought for Yahweh. The reference to battles with lions, which he [14] claims to have taken by the beard and killed with his shepherd's staff, does not seem as convincing to us as it did to Saul; and besides, the listening and questioning about the announced bounty – wealth, a brilliant marriage, tax exemption – only states what is known to every psychologist: that a human action always has several motives, of which usually only one is conscious. And this single motive here is Yahweh's command to avenge him, the "living God." David's strength lies in the certainty that his adversary—who is no longer an adversary, but rather a judged figure, delivered into Yahweh's hands—is within his grasp. By his own measure, David is neither a coward nor a traitor, but Yahweh's servant.

If David had any inkling of his opponent's true nature, he might have found another justification for treacherously killing him by violating the "honest custom of combat." This custom of combat is itself inherent to a particular species, and its validity is only meaningful for those warriors who themselves belong to the species that created it. Only within a species whose sense of value is grounded in a feeling of its own strength does a style of fighting develop such as that practiced by that "giant" and demanded as the only possible one. For him and his kind, it is genuine and therefore self-evident. For those of a different species, it is fundamentally alien. If those of a different species nevertheless

recognize it as valid, as universally binding even for themselves, this signifies nothing other than that they submit to the rule of a foreign law of their species. And indeed, we have received many historical indications that testify to the fact that the ruling class among the Philistines was of foreign origin, specifically Indo-European. This explains the "gigantic" stature found in the ruling classes: it is the form of the Nordic race, that race whose blood flowed in all peoples and tribes of Indo-European origin. The cultures we call Indo-European are—at least in their basic outlines—a created expression of this Nordic race. In addition, the Faelic race, closely related to the Nordic and even more "gigantic" in build, must also be considered for some Indo-Europeans.

[15] That “gigantic” fighting custom is also an expression of both races. It is meaningful and natural among people of such stature as we find, for example, in heightened depictions in the “Rolandes” on the town halls of some old German cities: people of a steep, towering physique and spirit, who love to stand upright and lean on nothing but their mighty sword. That Philistine warrior was of such a kind. However little has been reported about him (and even that only from enemy sources), it is enough to understand his physique. And in this physique of body and spirit, his fate is sealed, including his downfall.

The Nordic man has a right to reach out into the world and shape it into his own, in his own image. He has a right to do so because he cannot do otherwise: his natural law, his “nature,” demands it. But the nature of others is different, and it too has its own law. When people of a different nature fall under Nordic rule and thus under Nordic models, their own laws are violated, and they are, as it were, uprooted from their destiny. Their form becomes distorted, but they do not realize it until one day their own nature breaks through again. Those peoples of other blood, who are necessarily of a different nature of soul and body, could, as it were, learn Nordic fighting customs by heart and recognize them as valid; but in doing so, they do not become an expression of their own spiritual nature. For them, it can only be a mask they wear, perhaps without realizing it. It is possible that at that time, as in the Philistine people, some Nordic blood also flowed in the people of Israel, so that the rejection of the "upstart" shepherd David and his behavior by some of the stalwart warriors of Jacob also had blood-related roots. What is certain is that David, by casting off the mask of the alien custom and recognizing nothing more than what Yahweh reveals to him, now gives validity to his own natural law. And this one demands a different measure than that of the giant.

Here is the point where the tragic meaning of the word giant becomes clear. Goliath is a "giant" only in the eyes of others; in the eyes of his own kind, his measure is not gigantic, but the norm. But this norm and [16] everything that follows from it can – precisely for that reason – never be the law of others; not even if they should recognize it, i.e., take it as a model for themselves. This also applies to the law of "honest" or "noble" combat. What is sensible, and therefore noble and honest, for fighters of Nordic build, for "giants," cannot be the same for fighters of a completely different nature of soul and body. Only between fighters of the same kind is combat according to the same law possible: only where the nature and nature of the fighters mesh perfectly like the gears of a self-contained engine, only where the fighters fundamentally understand each other, will the fight be "honest" and maintain a common line that is experienced as noble. But where two different kinds attack each other in combat, each will necessarily be in the right, because each either violates or misuses the law of the other. A struggle between two different kinds, seen from the perspective of an uninvolved observer, can only be ugly and morally lawless—even, indeed especially, when both sides adhere to their own laws.

The figure of the “giant” Goliath exceeds the measure and scope of that Semitic world into which he or his like-minded ancestors invaded in order to dominate it. Anyone who wants to rule over strangers must know that no rule can eliminate their strangeness. He acts wisely and healthily if he considers his own law the only possible one and every other inferior, but he should beware of “improving” others by imposing the expression of his own nature upon them. For in doing so, he only teaches them to wear that mask of outward conformity which ultimately allows them to fell him with the most ludicrous weapon. He cannot change their laws or establish an understanding that leads to a shared life. For Goliath, David is a crooked dog, a coward, and a traitor precisely when he remains true to himself and obeys his law; and for David, Goliath is a blasphemous brute as long as his strength helps him, and as soon as he exposes himself—in David's eyes—he becomes a boorish fool whom any means are permitted to dispose of.

[17] This is what makes this fight so shameful. A fight between people of different races can never be honest, noble, or chivalrous, any more than a fight between humans and hired hands. Once such a fight has begun, nothing can be honest except the annihilation of the opponent. Goliath's ancestors failed to achieve this annihilation when they entered the land: they believed in unity with the foreign races in the form of a national community. But in doing so, they made themselves foreign elements among the children of the land and are now being eliminated, one after the other. This is the racial-historical meaning of the Goliath legend.

For people like us, for example, we Germans, as long as we remain true to ourselves, that way of fighting, as Goliath practices and demands, is "right," that is, racially appropriate—even if, in physical appearance, not every one of us is a Goliath today. This fighting style is self-evident to us because our nature demands it; more precisely: because the attitude that underpins it is predetermined in our psychological makeup. We understand such an attitude and such a way of fighting without explanation: to understand them means nothing other than becoming aware of what lives within ourselves. But the other attitude, that of David, is unfamiliar to us and remains alien even when we are told that it is exemplary. It is something entirely different for us, something we can never understand firsthand, but can only grasp through scholarly research.

This foreign element, which is the subject of our example, is not something insignificant to us, for it has often enough significantly influenced our history. Germanic history is a struggle of the Nordic soul for an experience that should never have been demanded of it because it contradicts its natural laws. And even today, this foreign element seeks to confuse us daily. We will not be finished with this until we learn to see it as it truly is. Our research has only just posed this question, and it has not yet fully answered it: What is the fundamental law (or laws) of Semitic humans?

[18]

2. Soul exploration through living with others - but how?

Even before the war I had decided to solve this problem. I was very young at the time and didn't know how to start. There was only one thing I was under no illusion about: that the task could not be accomplished on the paths taken so far - such as the interpretation of old texts or other created works of the early Semitic spirit[1]. Certainly: created goods (called culture in German) are the expression of those who created them and say something about their spiritual nature. Fortunately, it even says something more: it also testifies to other areas of life than just those that are commonly called the spiritual. But couldn't it be the case that the very decisive thing that constitutes the basic line of the essence of a certain type of human being cannot be said in words of human language and is therefore not included in any text or in any literal "cultural monument"? And even if it were sayable - who can tell us that we can actually understand what is written down in written words and sentences and what is said in such a way that is true to its own meaning? Even our own spiritual past, even if it is removed from us by a few gender sequences, becomes the subject of research, requires interpretation, and every interpretation can be right or wrong - experience has shown that almost every one is disputed at some point and then struggles with reasons, evidence, evidence for its correctness. But the creators themselves, who once produced these historically removed goods, and their former contemporaries and world comrades can no longer be heard as witnesses. And yet only they would be the only real witnesses in such a dispute over the truth, only they would be the infallible sources.

This is the case with the interpretation of historically distant evidence that comes from our own culture. Things are much more difficult when it comes to understanding works of a different kind. I would also not have quoted and interpreted the legendary account of the fight between David [19] and Goliath here if today - unlike when I was at school - I was not able to draw from sources that are more alive than the written word and from which what is written is now imbued with life for me.

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[1] The word Semitic means something completely different than the word Jewish, although Jewish certainly also contains Semitic. Ogl. the entrance to the 3rd chapter.

[19]

I confess: I too once started with old texts. And I thank them that I didn't understand them, rather: that everyone just kept asking me new questions instead of giving me answers. So the day came when I temporarily gave up on understanding someone else's past and decided to focus on those sources that flow, although confused, but always lively: the life of the present.

But how? Travel there, look for where life is still "real" and then live with the people - that sounds very simple. But the people there are not willing to tell us whether they are still real Arsemites or not. Even if we ask this question in their own language, they don't understand it. The question arises from our spirit and is a testament to our mental nature - not theirs. And so it continues when we begin to "live with people." We constantly carry our entire inner world, which has formed in the style of our mental nature over the course of our personal history, with us and do not leave it behind when we enter the foreign world. We cannot let go of this inner world, at least not initially (this beginning takes a long time) and never completely later on either. And yet all penetration into foreign worlds depends on how far we are able to leave our own world

there aside. Not only because people - even if we appear to be speaking in their language based on the words - always see us as strangers, as if we don't belong, and are very careful to hide from us exactly what we want to see and know. But above all because: otherwise we only reinterpret everything we think we “understand” in the sense of the world in which we then remain there.

Any true penetration into the inside of a foreign world presupposes that we learn to keep aside the world we brought with us. Of course, this requires knowledge of one's own world: a view of [20] oneself from a cool, objective distance and a ruthless separation of one's own mental resources. What does each person's “own” world consist of, materially speaking? From everything that has become significant for each of us in the course of our personal history: it is significant because it is shaped by meanings that come from our experience and determine what each thing is for each individual in their world. All things are only there for us as shaped by meaning.

This one I'm sitting on is an armchair - i.e. h. For me and people in my world it is this: for people in whose world there are things that mean "armchair" and in whose world such things make sense. But there are still people on this changing planet who don't know armchairs, don't have them and (how strange! some people now think) didn't want to have them even if they knew them. Because the use of an armchair and a chair in general contradicts the inherent style of their rest and their entire life; an “armchair” thing would have no meaning in their world. You can now certainly teach these people that somewhere - namely here with us - there are very strange things that are for strange people - i.e. h. in this case again for us - have a strange and foreign meaning, which is referred to by the users of these strange things with the sound structure "armchair". You can tell these people all of this and they will then understand the external meaning of the word “armchair”, which tells them: a thing that is there and serves that purpose.

But those people haven't penetrated the word, because they haven't penetrated our world: they know nothing about how such an armchair is experienced when, as a child, you have respectfully avoided it for years, known it as your father's place of work and now sit back in it to think. The entire load of meaning that comes from our lives, which such a thing in our world has for us and which constitutes its familiarity for us - these people have no idea of all of this and cannot suspect it, because for them it is what they have not experienced.

[21] When it is explained to them, they learn the word as an empty vocabulary: a shell of meaning that is not filled with any experienced meaning for them.

This is how it is with the entire existence of things in our world. Externally, such sets of things can be interchanged. I can transport everything that exists here to any place on earth and can obtain other things from foreign worlds and place them in my spatial area: Japanese masks, Indian pagodas, African fetishes. I can gain a relationship with these things: a highly personal, very experienced relationship from which these things gain inner meaning for me. But this experienced relationship and this inner meaning=for=me is certainly very different from the meaning that these same things have in the world of the people who created them and from whose world they were taken. A mere exchange of things from two different worlds does not bring about an exchange of these worlds themselves. For, as we saw, a thing not only includes its exchangeable material existence, but also the meaning from which it became what it is and which it now has - but only has in the world from which it comes; and this meaning can only be understood from that world.

For the soul researcher, things are not as simple as, for example, B. for the merchant who lives from exports and imports. Even by traveling - in a purely spatial sense - into the space occupied by that alien world on this star, very little has been done for the understanding, scientific conquest of the alien world. Research trips of the usual kind usually do not produce any soul-searching results of scientific importance. What does the explorer not usually take with him in terms of external, interchangeable items: pole tents made of canvas (they are in fact very practical), camp beds, folding tables, folding chairs, thermos bottles, etc.; and I certainly don't deny that all this can be very pleasant. When it comes to clothing, he will also choose what he believes to be the most practical clothing for his purpose, namely the so-called tropical clothing with a cork helmet: it appears to be particularly tried and tested and suitable for performance in hot countries.

[22] Well, we will be told, if these things interfere with spiritual work - get rid of them! That's very simple: let's just leave all western household items at home, as well as our usual western clothing. Nothing is easier to change than a dress. In short: right there in a foreign space we exchange the things we are used to with the things we are unfamiliar with.

Certainly we must do that; not immediately, but gradually. However, this does not mean that the essential difficulties have been eliminated; they are just beginning. Let's start with the last thing, the exchanged dress: is the exchanged really a dress for me or just a costume? I wear e.g. For example, in Arabia, the Arab dress with the same naturalness with which

the Arab wears it and with which I wear "my own" here? And do I have no relationship to the dress that I call “my own” that is deeper than that of habit? Then everything would be very simple. Habit can certainly be overridden by new, different habits.

The costume we wear is not a product of chance. Our experience is expressed in our body through facial expressions and gestures: a lot depends on whether our body is designed exactly as our particular type of experience requires in order to have in it the perfect instrument of expression. And the shape of his clothing must match the shape of this body. The Nordic performance man has invented a performance costume. The men's costume of the West, the "suit", is the most useful costume for performing work. As fashions and centuries have changed, apart from baroque incidents that arose under foreign models, it has limited itself more and more to the practical and has rejected almost everything that is not immediately useful in a performance life in the Nordic style. Only the neck tie leaves a little room for colorful possibilities: it is the last decoration and flourish of the achiever. The traditional costume of the Oriental people is completely different. This is not "practical" for performance in our sense: it flows widely around the limbs and favors very specific types of movement, namely the species-appropriate movements of precisely those types of people.

[23] It is able to give even the beggar and highwayman of the Oriental style a touch of the prophet and priest; More precisely: it highlights this feature, it helps it to stand out, and that means: it dresses it. And how impossible these people look when, in the spasm of imitation, they put on our clothes that were not invented by them and not made for them. It distorts their figure because it contradicts their styles. Such a sight seems provocatively ridiculous, especially when these people are actually still "real": it is precisely then that it turns out that they are able to put on our foreign clothing, but are not able to wear it in the style in which our clothing is intended and in which it wants to be worn. - And shouldn't the same apply to us? By putting on someone else's clothing, you are not yet "wearing" it.

And yet there is a saving possibility in which the most important avenues of soul research arise. Can't we learn to wear someone else's dress by learning the entire role of life that includes wearing that dress in style? Just as the actor grasps a foreign role from a single point and from there automatically takes control of everything that belongs to it in detail, without being conscious of it during the play, in exactly the same way - to a certain extent - it must also be possible to grasp the life of people and species that are foreign to them through mimicry. And in fact: this possibility exists. Such mimic work can begin with external imitation; This already includes, if not yet wearing it in the appropriate style, but at least the external mastery of the strange dress. (Progress can be easily determined at any time: we only need to climb the mountain in Arab clothing or swing ourselves onto a mount and then we will notice whether we are stuck or not. The person who gets stuck is who has not yet understood the meaning of this clothing and does not use it in accordance with this meaning.) Imitation leads to external mastery of foreign expression in movement, speech, custom, and daily habits; It must one day reach a point at which [24] all of this becomes commonplace and therefore self-evident. That obstacle that initially blocks all access to the inside of someone else's life: the horror of the completely other, then disappears more and more and finally releases us to the point where we can trust the vibration of this foreign life. And this is ultimately what needs to be explored here.

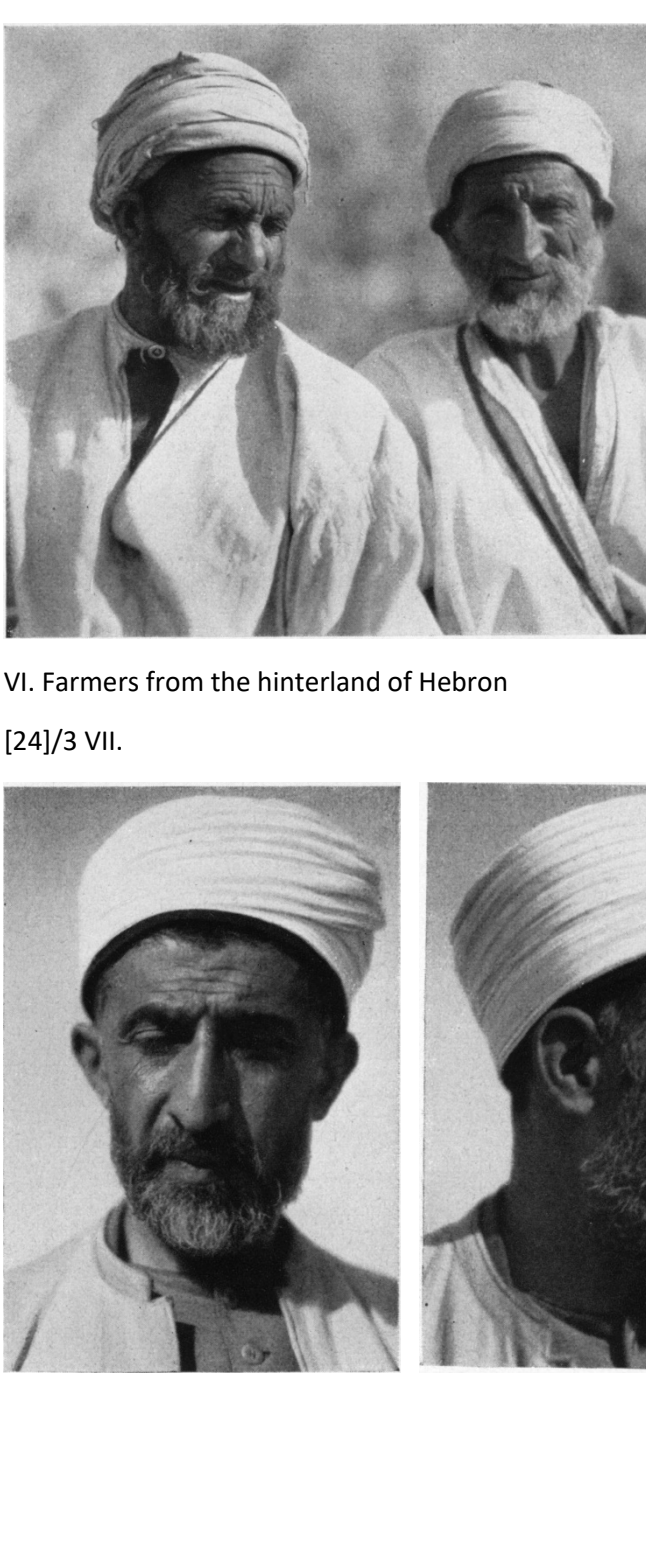
The path of participation in alien life goes from the outside in. Of course, what we “live with” we only ever live second-hand. We ourselves remain what we are - how could we be otherwise? The existence of our own being is not affected; we only hold back the fulfillment of our own being within ourselves for the duration of the game. This means: we suspend all judgments that have arisen from our history within the mimetic play consciousness and start from the beginning, as if we were infants: we shape the world, this new world, from the co-execution of a piece of history in which we participate, even if only second-hand. What we ourselves are and necessarily remain fundamentally, we lock up, as it were, in a steel cage, which we always carry with us invisibly and which we may sometimes secretly open for a vacation, a furtive breath of air of our own being, but without forgetting that such vacations must become increasingly rare. Because it keeps the foreign world away from us and prevents us from opening it up.

Keeping one's own being in steel clamps is part of every perfect mimic performance if it is really a genuine and honest piece of work. Keeping something in brackets doesn't mean giving it up. If the actor wanted to give up his own real life role in the role he was playing, then he could only play Othello once in his life, because he would then actually strangle his partner - a process that he would hardly be allowed to repeat. The steel brackets are those of the game consciousness. The actor can let a volcano of passion rage on the stage, and this passion can be real and honest in its own way, but he will not forget for a moment [25] that he is on the stage in a piece of acted life and not in his own life: not in his first-hand life.

[24]/1

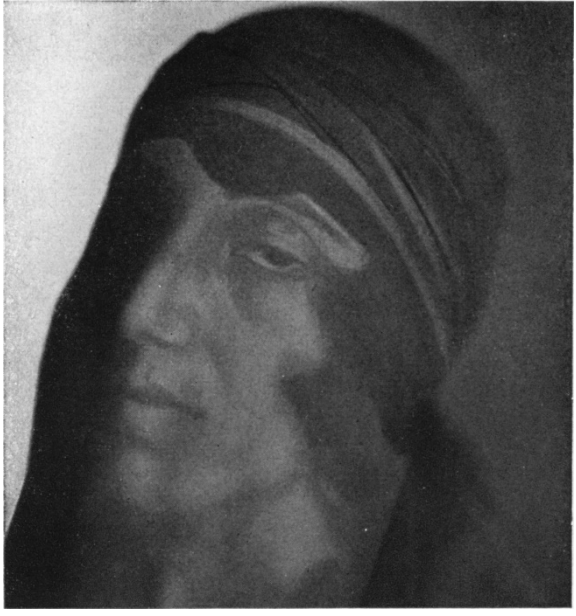
V. Bedouin from Transjordan

[24]/2



VI. Farmers from the hinterland of Hebron

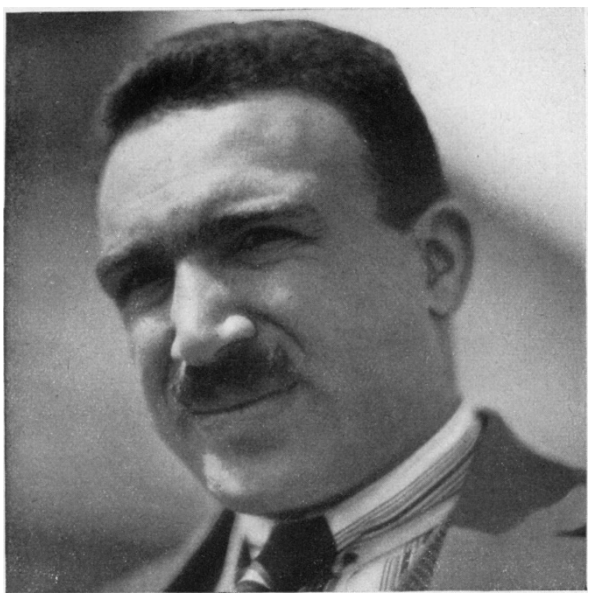
[24]/3 VII.



(above): Arab legal scholar from Jerusalem

(below): Arab city woman. The outer veil is folded back.

[24]/4 VIII.



(above): Efendi from Jerusalem

(below): Arab city woman. Both veils are folded back.

[25] The role that the actor learns, rehearses, masters and finally plays is written by a human being, a poet. The role that the racial soul researcher learns, rehearses and masters more and more as he plays along is written by nature. The game lasts longer than just one evening, just as the work of nature is older and more enduring than that of all poets of all times and peoples. Day after day and night after night - in a seemingly endless sequence of ever new and yet everyday and typically repeating events - only alone can we come to recognize more and more how people of a certain but alien kind behave over and over again. In this way we only experience the legality from which he has to behave in one way and not otherwise, and - in the course of the life we have played along with - we then behave in exactly the same way in the corresponding situation: not because we have to do so according to our inner law (we have forced "ourselves", our self, our own being, into steel brackets), but because "it" has to be that way based on the other law: the law of the role played.

In this way, we build up the world of others step by step and layer by layer through mimic experience: the alien world. Of course, we make mistakes, big mistakes - especially at the beginning. But these mistakes correct themselves. Because every time we violate the laws of others by behaving "wrong" and falling out of character, the counteraction from our playing partners soon corrects us. And these are not players in our mimic sense: they play their own role in life, their natural life first hand. The counter-effect can be harmless, but it can also be embarrassing or even fatal. In any case, we then appear strange to them and are taken as strange. The reaction that corrects our mistakes is comparable to that which occurs from the engine of a motor vehicle when the learner driver mishandles it.

[26] It is precisely this automatic correction, which protects us more and more from violations of foreign law and against incorrect interpretation of other people's lives, that constitutes the scientific reliability of our way of working, the method of co-living or mimic method. A racial soul research that could only be carried out at home between books, in museums, in short: at the green table, could never lead to final, valid results, because it lacked the final proof of the ultimate source: the lived foreign life itself.

You could also call our way of working that of playing along with other people's roles in life. The word play then means a sober piece of often quite hard work, not a game at the end of the day for fun or to improve your mood. It demands the utmost distance from one's own self and thus an extreme strain of Nordic possibility. What the researcher himself is, he is always not allowed to live in the course of playing along: he stands next to himself and, while working, keeps himself, as it were, ten paces away from his body.

Since this method of research has become established through its results and has enjoyed unexpected recognition, voices have been raised that would like to claim that racial soul research and its method of coexistence are only possible for mixed-race researchers. Finding the ultimate sources of such claims does not require any soul searching. When the fox noticed that some people were getting to the grapes that were hanging too high for him and didn't find them so terribly sour, he threw himself into his chest and said: I don't want to have them at all, I'm far too pure for that!

3. Semites today

The term "Semites" is an artificial word that scholars created after the biblical name Shem. Linguistics mainly uses [27] this word to describe a group of related languages, the "Semitic languages", which differ clearly from all other human languages through their common internal form and also through a widely shared vocabulary. Semitic languages are e.g. B. Arabic and Hebrew. The speakers of these languages are initially referred to as Semites. But today these Semitic-speaking people do not form a blood unity in the racial sense. People of the most diverse races live in the Arabic-speaking area, and of the Jews in Palestine today, who speak a kind of Hebrew, one can say that almost all of the world's races are mixed together. We have to say "Arsemites" if we want to use the word to describe a race, a type of human being that can be clearly identified from a psychological and anthropological point of view: the type of human being who once created the Semitic languages as an expression of their own special mental form. Only one race, namely the desert (Oriental) race, can be considered the creator of the Semitic language form. When we talk about Arsemites here, we only ever mean them.

The equally artificial but not scientific word "anti-Semitism" has meant that the word "Semites" is often used almost synonymously with "Jews", especially in Germany. The foreign word anti-Semitism means defense against Jews. But what repulses us Nordic-oriented Germans about Jews is precisely not the Semitic nature of Judaism. Arsemitic (desert) blood is no longer strongly represented in today's Judaism, and the original Semitic spirit is even less strongly represented. Racially, today's Judaism is most strongly characterized by the ern race, whose shape also includes the Jewish nose. This race is fundamentally different from the desert race. Furthermore, it is precisely a very specific type of racial mixture that bothers us about what we today call a typical Jew. However, as I said, Arsemitic plays a relatively small part in this mixture today. Things must have been different in the early days of the people of Israel. We should imagine David and his people [28] as being even more typical of a desert-dwelling people (despite David's perhaps reddish hair). Arsemitic blood can only be found in relatively pure groups in the Arabic-speaking population. But of course only in individual groups, namely the warlike camel herder tribes, who live from the Syrian steppes to southern Arabia in peculiar forms of wandering and changing pastures.

In Arabic, these nomads are called 'arab, while all non-nomads, the townspeople and the farmers, never call themselves arab, but only aulåd arab: children of Arabs, descendants of nomads. This usage of language already points to the historical origins of today's Arab culture and to the fact that the roots of Arab life lie in Bedouin culture. In the 7th century AD, it was essentially the nomadic tribes of the inner Arabian steppes who - suddenly united by the bond of Islam and, as they had never been before, under uniformly determined leadership - overran the old empires around Arabia and struck at the gates of the West. That was the great age of Bedouinism: it began suddenly and disappeared almost suddenly after a short, stormy flourishing.

But the Bedouins themselves? They are still there as they were more than twelve hundred years ago and as they were in biblical times. My job was to seek them out and live with them in their world: to learn their role and play it from within, as if I were one of them.

But, as I said, it doesn't happen all of a sudden. In Palestine e.g. B. and in western Syria, where I initially started, there are no real Bedouins. This

has its reasons in Bedouin life itself. Bedouin life is tied to vast steppes and to freedom from administrative intervention by the state. But Palestine has been a state-governed country for thousands of years: building land for local planters, farming land - of course fragmented by interspersed steppe and desert areas. One could also say: steppe and desert areas, fragmented by scattered fruit land.

[29] It comes down to the same thing: through the fragmentation, the vast space is broken and opened to state access. And the tighter the state's grip, the less true Bedouinism develops.

That's why only miserable semi-nomads were able to survive in Palestine proper. Only south of Bersheba (Bir essabe*), where the vast steppe begins again, and east of the Jordan does real Bedouin life begin. In German books, e.g. B. racial studies content, one occasionally finds "Bedouins from Palestine" depicted, which the knowledgeable recognizes as "constructed people" (mutafallihin) by their costume, but unmistakably by their type and expression, i.e. h. as people whose ancestors perhaps once lived nomadically in distant times, but who have long since fallen into a tame fellahinism for a number of generations. They behave towards real Bedouins as a domestic cattle behaves towards a capercaillie. But Palestinians like to show these harmless people to strangers as Bedouins.

The urban-educated Arab calls these people "built-up people" (mutafallihin), meaning that they are neither Bedouins nor real farmers. Of course, it must be added that especially in the countries to the west where the Arabic language is spoken, to which Palestine belongs, the majority of city dwellers are far too addicted to Europe to consider anything worthwhile that lies outside of their European imitation spasms. The Bedouin simply calls those built up "peasants" (fallähln). Only they call themselves Arab (nomads). Some of their tribes have retained memories of the nomadism of their ancestors in their costumes, and most of them still live today in huts made of black goat hair fabric: "tents", the location of which is only changed now and then within a very narrow margin. Only a few have built stone houses or nested in caves. But the main characteristic of Bedouinism is missing: the movement from pasture to pasture with herds of migratory animals within vast steppes in the evenly changing oscillation of the seasons, the camel as the core of the economy, and the defensive dependence of the tribe.

[30] Anyone who does not dare to live and fight in the open steppe and falls under the tutelage of the authorities instead of taking up arms has already proven that "his origins are bad" and that he is not a Bedouin. The terms arab (nomads and semi-nomads) and bedu (Bedouins) are not synonymous.

Even on the other side of the Jordan throughout northern Arabia, not everyone who lives in tents is Bedouin. There are nomadic hunting tribes (slejb) of unclear origins that no one considers to be Bedouins[1]. And there are fully nomadic tribes, such as the Scherarât, who differ in no way from Bedouins except that “their origin is not good” and they are not taken seriously. Their type and their entire way of life is Bedouin except for this point, which is externally expressed in a relationship of dependence on a full-fledged Bedouin tribe (e.g. the Scheraråt to the Beni Sachr). They are not "constructed people" like those tame people in Palestine who still call themselves Arab; they are considered capable raiding entrepreneurs. Compared to the built-up people, they are real Bedouins in their way of life. And yet we should not count them as such, since we ultimately do not understand Bedouinism any better than the Bedouins themselves. We would like to understand things here from the Arab point of view.

The Arabic-speaking population of the Arabian Peninsula and the countries surrounding it is divided into the following two main groups: the nomads (arab) and the Sassen (hadar). The nomads are divided into full Bedouins and false Bedouins (such as the Scheraråt); The Sassen are divided into townspeople (madanije or mudun) and farmers (fallähin). Between the two groups, the nomads and the Sasses, there are those “built-up people” who would like to be counted among the nomads themselves, but are considered farmers by them. In terms of ethnology and soul history, they offer a lot of insight. We want to call them semi-nomadic.

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[1] Regarding a certain slejb=tribe, I was assured by Bedouins that they derived their origins from the Germans! Unfortunately, I never saw the tribe. A possible explanation for this fable can perhaps be found in the fact that a French scholar claimed to have visited the tribe.

[31]

The two main groups differ from each other deeply in many ways: in way of thinking, way of life, clothing, language. Of the city dwellers today, the middle and younger generation dress more western-style, the more distinguished they want to appear. In less respected circles, strange mixed costumes made from tomorrow's and western clothing are popular - mixtures that make a mockery of any sense of style. Only the

European hat is inappropriate because of its brim. The head covering must be rimless so that the forehead can touch the ground during a certain phase of the prayer, the sudjûd. That's why the red fez (tarbush) with the black tassel still exists. Only recently has the Feisalise, a felt hat with a notch but without a brim invented in the Drak, spread here and there in its place. Bandages can be tied on the tarbush: white bandages as a sign of dignity for the urban Koran scholars, colored bandages as a dress for the farmers. Since the war, the Bedouin headscarf with the thick black wool headband has become fashionable among younger farmers, which makes it difficult for the unfamiliar foreigner to distinguish the peasant costume from the Bedouin.

This description applies to the countries of Western Asia, as long as they are Arabic; Elsewhere the costumes differ somewhat differently. What is consistent, however, is that the urban women's costume inherently strives for a complete sack-like covering of the body, which has only recently been transformed into a more and more Parisian cut - again following the example of the West and the Turks, who were already heavily Westernized before the war. However, the covering costume and especially the double facial veil are still fundamentally retained. The more distinguished a woman or her owner thinks she is, the more she has to keep a veil. Even the most enlightened European Efendi does not deny his ancestral customs on this point. In contrast, the farmer's wife goes uncovered, and her garment covers her body without distorting its shape. This is why the disrespected peasant woman, and even more so the Bedouin woman, so often has a springy, light, wonderful walk full of strength and grace, while the city woman [32] seems to be struggling when she waddles to her neighbor's house or to the market - these are the only walks she takes. None of this applies to the Bedouin. She learns from a child to move her limbs: collecting wood, carrying water, sliding up and down the camel's neck and back - nothing spongy or crouched occurs.

When I set foot in the Orient in the spring of 1927, I did not yet fully foresee that my spiritual work there would ultimately have to concentrate entirely on the Bedouins. Because where those races, the desert and Hither Asiatic, to whose psychological demarcation my work there ultimately resulted, could be found in the clearest expression and at the same time in their own stylistic sphere of life, all of this still had to be explored at that time. So I had to try to familiarize myself with the entire breadth and narrowness of Arab life, always starting from the directly experienced individual case in order to grasp the typical aspects that shaped it. The Arab Sasses can only be understood against the background of nomadism, I soon understood that. But also the other way around: the Bedouin's lifestyle only becomes completely clear when it stands out from the Arab Sassen culture.

So I started my work with this one. It was clear to me that my life with the full Bedouins could only begin when I was able to somehow appear as one of them. It was therefore necessary to solve a seemingly self-contradictory task: to learn and practice the Bedouin role without having to spend time among full Bedouins. For the time being I lived with the Sassen, i.e. h. the inhabitants of solid stone houses in Arab towns and villages, and with the camping semi-nomads of the Jordan Valley and the “Desert of Judah”. I familiarized myself with their dialects and let them tell me as much as I could, or better: as much as they could, about the full Bedouins of the free steppes and deserts: about life beyond the Jordan and the mountains of Moab. And each of these resident or semi-resident groups has a slightly different image of that free nomadism, and each one a wrong one.

[33]

4. The Task of Being a Neighbor

After some searching, I chose an Arab farmhouse near Jerusalem as my location and starting point. From there, to my left, I looked out over the city with its walls, towers, and mosques; opposite me, nestled into the slopes of the Mount of Olives, lay the village of Silwan (the ancient Siloam), which extended across to my side of the valley, and whose last houses were my neighbors. Down the valley, I needed to walk for barely an hour to come across the first black goat-hair tents belonging to the Sawähre, a semi-nomadic tribe. They camped from there all the way down into the Jordan Valley. The Jordan Rift Valley itself, where it reaches the Dead Sea, lies 400 meters below sea level, while Jerusalem is 800 meters above sea level. My view down into the valley was obstructed by the barren, yellow mountain cones known as "the Judean Desert." But beyond them, I could see the rugged, long blue wall of the Transjordanian mountains, the "Mountains of Moab," behind which my Bedouin life would later unfold.

The location of my home and workshop proved to be well chosen. There I was a neighbor to the city dwellers and a neighbor to the farmers at the same time, and also a neighbor to the semi-nomads who passed by my house when they rode to the city. I sensed then that in the Orient, everything depends on being a neighbor. For someone who does not belong to the land as a blood relative, as a member of a clan, it is the only way to gain the trust of the inhabitants. The path to trust leads through familiarity, and familiarity takes time. Whoever does not take

the time to become familiar remains a stranger. But a neighbor is almost part of the neighbor's family. Within his circle, all secrets vanish of their own accord; men seek his counsel, he is present at the deathbed to hear the dying man's last wishes, and his opinion is sought in the choice of a bride for a son and in determining the dowry for the girl's father. Even the women need his advice on many matters and know how to obtain it, even though they are veiled and considered "forbidden" to others.

[34] For the city dwellers, I was initially the European living among them, but they forgot my foreignness to the extent that I strived to adapt to their lifestyle and they heard and saw that I lived as a Muslim. Some things, however, were difficult to overcome. Visiting hours begin before sunrise, after the morning prayer. The morning prayer is performed at the time of the first twilight, when the eye is able to distinguish a white thread from a black one. The prayer has its fixed prescribed formulas, which are accompanied by changing body postures, from standing to prostrating and touching the earth with the forehead. Such a fixed sequence of body postures constitutes a prayer section, and for each of the five prayer times of the Islamic day, the prayer sections are structured differently. If the sun rises during the morning prayer, the prayer is invalid. But if the sun surprises a Muslim while still asleep, it is a great disgrace. "Prayer is better than sleep!"

In this one respect, I have sometimes been a bad Muslim, because I am an enthusiastic morning sleeper. I tried to bear the shame with dignity. But the first morning visit was terrible. I was sleeping on my bed on the floor when I was awakened by a furious knocking. At first I thought: someone has mistaken the door, and I turned over. Then, when the knocking became even more frantic over the course of about five minutes, I expected an official action, perhaps from the police – reason enough to remain as quiet as a mouse. But when the noise still didn't subside, it became too much for me. Angrily, I jumped from my bed to the door and asked who was outside. "Me!" was the answer. Who? "Me, me!" Then it became clear to me that all the noise was coming from a single person. I called out, "I don't know anyone named 'I'. What's your name?" "I am your neighbor, O Muhammad Ferld!" "What do you want?" "Your well-being!" Then I understood that my morning sleep had lured me out of the rhythm of Eastern life, and I was a backsliding Westerner. The neighbor wanted to [35] do something kind for me: he wanted to visit me. I said, "Welcome, O neighbor! There's room for you! Just wait a little while until I have finished my morning prayer!" And with that, I put on my clothes.

This, too, was a transgression, that I slept undressed. The Oriental only removes his outer garments. And while I put on my yellow and black striped silk kumbaz and braided the colorful belt around my waist, I silently vowed to improve. Then I opened the door to my guest and offered him the Salaam. He had reason to be pleased with me, for I lingered a long time before fetching the green coffee beans, roasting them, then pouring them onto the cooling tray and grinding them in the mortar. My long hesitation meant: I want to enjoy your esteemed presence for as long as possible. For the guest may not leave before enjoying the coffee. After the first cup, he wants to get up, but I don't let him and prepare him a second, and so on—eventually he will ask for permission to leave. In the depths of my heart, I wish him to the devil, for my stomach is rumbling for something other than this almost porridge-like strong black coffee concoction. Like a mirage, the image of a Scandinavian breakfast appears at the edge of my tormented consciousness. But the other hears nothing of this rumbling and feels nothing of this torment. We exchange the prescribed pleasantries, and he feels comfortable. I atone and offer him the fourth cup: freshly brewed, sweetened, and spiced with Obhår. He accepts it, enjoys it, and licks his beard and lips with satisfaction. Then he asks for permission to leave and rises. I say, "Too soon! Too soon!" and thank God, for now he is really leaving. Since then, I have kept my vows more and more, and the relapses have become increasingly rare. Without this school, I would never have become a true man of the East, and therefore ultimately not a Bedouin either.

Among the settled population, especially the farmers, the donkey is the most common means of transport. Among the "modern" city dwellers, however, who live in European-style suburbs, the American-made automobile is entirely prevalent. But since it wasn't my job to introduce Western customs to the Levantines, I associated more with the old-fashioned people [36] and the less respected circles in the city. I acquired a donkey. I bought it at a fairly good price and later sold it for even more. I often stayed for weeks with farmers in more remote areas. When they then traveled to the city, they returned my visit. Sometimes five of them would stay with me, so that I had to reinforce my household staff, which usually consisted of the wife of a landless farmer during the day, with a male helper, namely her husband. More and more, my house became a stopping place for the semi-Bedouins of the Jordan Valley whenever they had business in the city. I was close to keeping a flock of sheep so that I would always have fresh meat and thus be ready to receive guests. The semi-Bedouins were more agreeable to me than the farmers, because they are less obsessively concerned with precision in their daily prayers. But the visits of the farmers ensured that I did not lose my practice of Islamic life. In the morning, or before dawn, I was up

earlier than them and woke them and offered them fresh water for their ablutions. Then I called them out into my garden, which stretched along a slope, and led the prayers. This was always a victory over my morning lethargy. Sometimes it was a Pyrrhic victory.

The evenings were often no easier than the mornings. I am a lover of solitude. I had to carefully conceal this there, because it doesn't fit into the lives of the people. Every evening, the neighbors gather, separated by gender, in one house in the neighborhood. In the house where the men meet, there must be no woman, and in the house where the women meet, there is absolutely no man. Small boys up to the age of ten or eleven are allowed to be with the women. A precise age limit cannot be determined, because nobody knows exactly how old they are. Sometimes spoiled, cheeky boys of perhaps fourteen years of age are tolerated among the women. Anyone who frequently absents themselves from the gathering without being away on a trip is considered suspicious and will soon be shunned.

The purpose of these gatherings is gossip. People squat on the ground, smoke, drink coffee, and talk. The men talk about business and politics, [37] as well as matters of faith. Sometimes, especially among very ordinary people, the conversation rises for an evening or several far above its usual level. Someone who can read reads or—if they have learned—chants from the Quran, and the others listen spellbound, drinking in the sweet, fleeting euphony of their refined mother tongue. When a pause occurs, one hears a groan like the moans of pleasure from the listeners. Then a long discussion about the meaning of a single surah can follow. I have seen and heard men whom I otherwise knew to be very unpleasant, and in whom their best qualities suddenly and unexpectedly emerged, so that I secretly reassured them of what I had previously thought about them.

Such high points do not occur in women's evening conversations. At the beginning, they talk about cooking, children, and family. Later, groups form where risqué stories from married life are whispered, while nearby the children fall asleep on the mattresses spread out all around them, or cry and scream from exhaustion and overstimulation. Each child who falls asleep has a blanket pulled over their face. Then the windows and doors are carefully closed. The heat and the scents become more noticeable. Amidst all this, there is singing from time to time. Then it might happen that a mother wakes her child so that it doesn't miss something particularly beautiful.

The most exhausting things were the festivals: weddings and circumcisions. They last for three days, without interruption, day and night. From morning on, the women call out into the valley: one starts the call with a far-carrying voice, and the others then join in with a long, drawn-out trill. Hardly a day passed without me hearing the festive call from the large village of Silwån, which lies opposite me and all the way up to my house: hour after hour, incessantly. Only the call to prayer from the mosque towers could interrupt the call to the festival. The festivals themselves are an intensification of the nightly gatherings through song and dance: the men on their own, and the women and girls in separate groups. The women and girls are allowed to participate from a remote vantage point, such as the roof of a mosque.

[38] They admire the dance of the boys and men from the house, but not the other way around. What usually only happens in the evenings now extends over three days and nights.

Such a rhythm of life is only possible where work plays no role and has no value. In the city, only those who absolutely have to work do so. Those who don't need to work sit in front of the coffee house during the day and smoke the water pipe. Before evening, they stroll home and from there to their neighbor's. More than once I said to myself: Woe to you that you are a neighbor! Because for me, work unfortunately did play a role. During my years in the Orient, I filmed and processed more than 4000 individual films. I had built a darkroom out of sheet metal and beams in one of the three vaulted rooms of my house, but it was quite simple and often suffered from a lack of water. When I had worked during the day, I felt different during the night sessions than my neighboring revelers. This was the mostly unfillable gap in my Oriental existence. Even later, during my time with the Bedouin, where I was usually only allowed to use the camera unnoticed, it was my torment and the constant source of secret relapses into my inner Western world. The best time, and the most important for my mimetic immersion, was the last period with the Beni Sakhr, when my camera was damaged and rendered unusable by a break-in into my tent and was thus temporarily removed from my life.

The farmer, above all, is forced to work, which is why he is despised. The farmers represent a selection of the least Arab people within the Arabic-speaking population. Unless a special festival is being celebrated, the farmer likes to go to bed early and often breaks the custom of nightly gatherings. The farmers are probably the only people in Arabia who occasionally really sleep in. The veiling of women and the separation of the sexes is impossible for them, simply because of the need for shared work. Most of them also only own one-room houses (the word bêt

means both house and room) which serve as a combined living and sleeping area for the entire family.

[39] Many farmers are in debt and completely at the mercy of urban businessmen. The city merchant, if he knows the farmer, often doesn't demand cash payment but extends credit – seemingly without end. The farmer is inexperienced in accounting and loses track of his finances, yet continues to buy: sugar, coffee, spices, fabrics, etc. One day he realizes that his little house and his fields are heavily mortgaged and that he actually owns nothing anymore. Now the merchant demands immediate cash: the amount owed plus high interest. The farmer's property is forfeited to him. The end result is that the former inhabitants of the house make a tent out of a few rags, move to the outskirts of a city, and look for some meager income.

One morning, when I looked out of my window, there were ragged tents, a one-eyed donkey, and women and children. "Gypsies," my neighbors said, turning up their noses. But I saw that they weren't Gypsies, but impoverished farmers who hadn't been able to hold onto their property and were now living like nomads. They came from the area between Hebron (el-Khalil) and the Dead Sea. Soon they came to me and asked for a drink of water. First, it was the children who knocked at my door, then the women. They were strangers here and didn't have to fear anyone's gossip. The first woman who came was Hamde. She looked shy and distrustful, like a wild animal seeing a human. Then she came daily and cleaned my house and my belongings. The shyness soon disappeared because of the good wages, and the distrust dissolved in all the little songs she sang while working. That was still at the beginning of my time in the Orient. One day she didn't come, and after her came Serife. Then came Muhammadise. She looked almost like a little Black girl, perhaps thirteen years old, but she was a wife and already the mother of a squalling infant, whom she carried on her back. She was amusing to look at, always cheerful and prone to childish jokes. She took care of my house until the very end.[1]

[1] Hamde and Muhammadlje can be seen in our Plate XII.

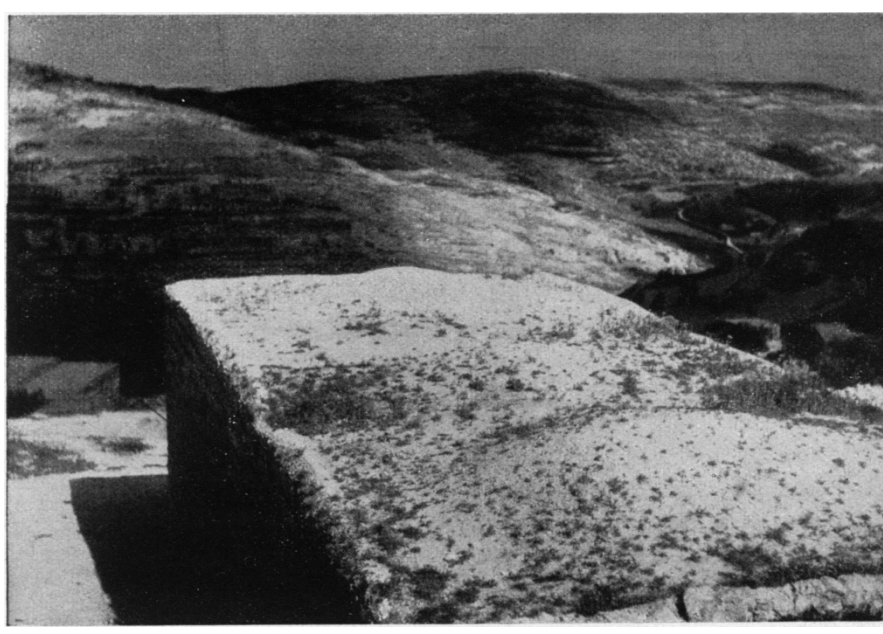
[40]

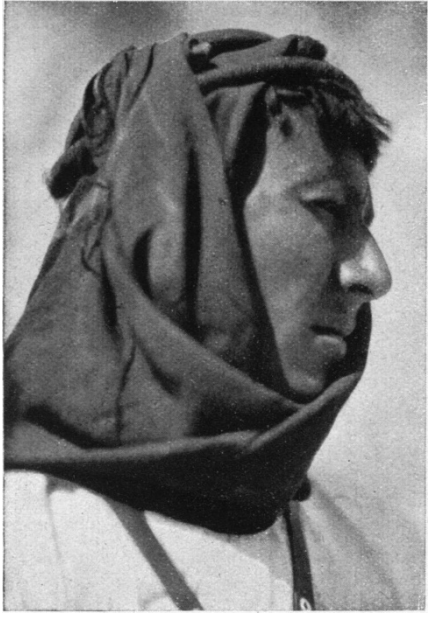
5. The Misunderstanding

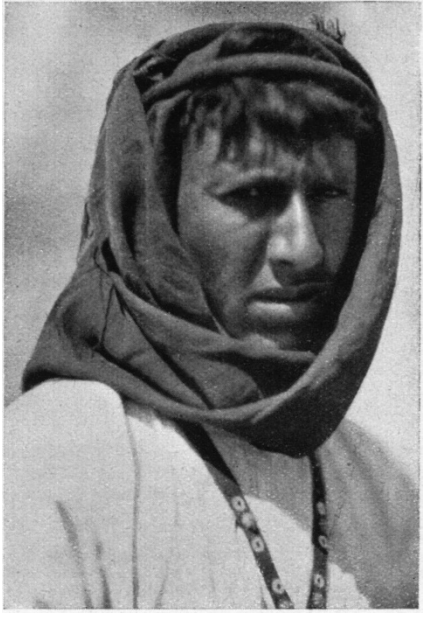
One day, young Hassan from the semi-nomadic Abedije tribe, whose black tents I could see from the roof of my house, came to visit me. He wanted to invite me to a festival of his tribe. But I had other plans. I had invited a Sahüri (i.e., a man from the Sawähre tribe) to ride with me through the entire territory of his tribe, from the vicinity of my house down to the Ghör – that is, the wide Jordan Valley. At that time, I preferred the Sawähre to the Abedije: as many of them as I had met were petty rascals. But young Hassan was standing there, waiting for an answer. Saying no is a grave breach of etiquette. So I examined his white, shirt-like garment, the Thöb, which was elegantly cut and embroidered with a pretty pattern at the collar and on the long sleeves – or rather, had been, for now only meager, dirty remnants of it remained. I said: "May God bless the hands of your sisters! Truly, I will not come to your festivals until I possess a garment like this." – With that, I gave him a few silver coins, along with a leather weapon belt as a gift – a very popular item of clothing even among the semi-Bedouins, although on this side of the Jordan, even daggers are only carried secretly. The silver coins were probably more than double what he had paid for the fabric. What remained was for the work of his sisters, and at a rate above the usual local rate. The gift was for his courtesy.

A few weeks later, he came and brought the garment. The fabric was poor, the stitching and even the pattern were machine-made. Such shoddy work comes from the sewing shop of an Armenian in the Old City of Jerusalem. I said: "Who would have thought that there are sewing machines in the tents of the Abedije!" He then said that I seemed particularly pleased and demanded two more silver coins as extra payment for the fabric. That's when I realized the fellow thought I was stupid because I had treated him in a friendly, neighborly way and shown him generosity. It was a misunderstanding.

[40]/1

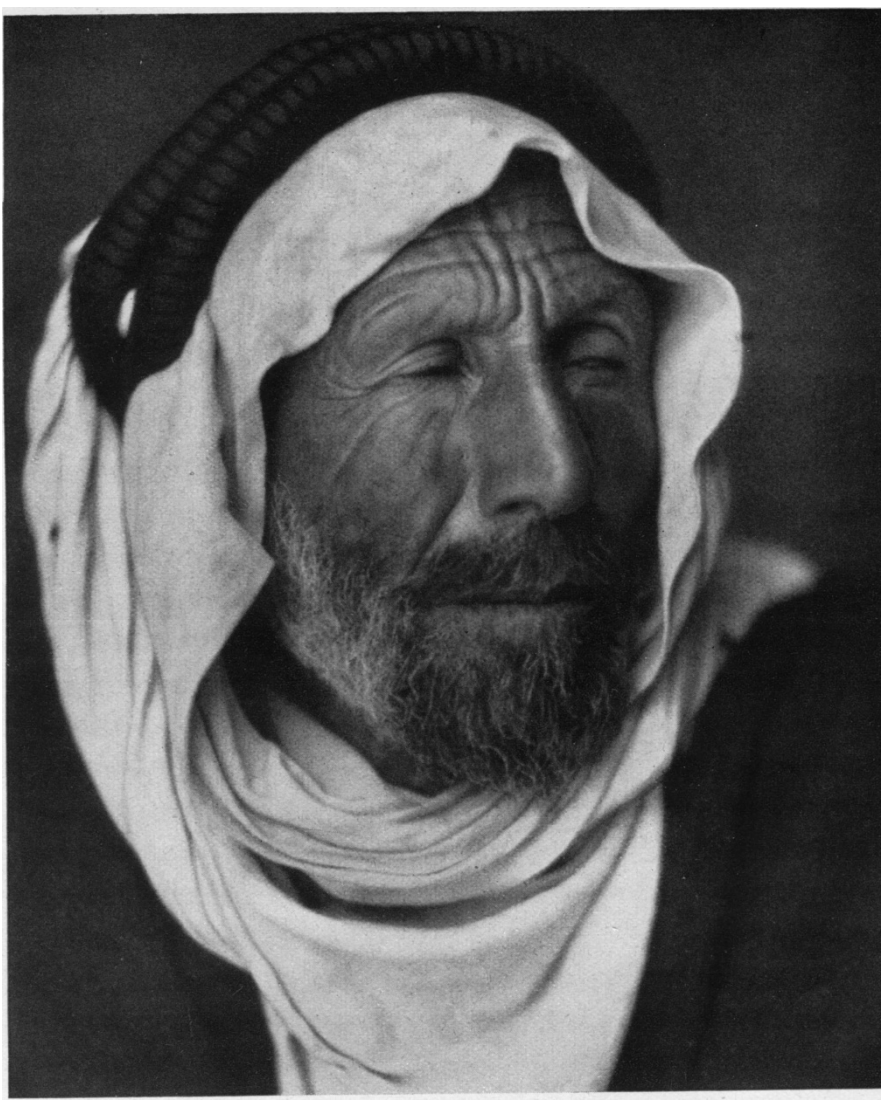






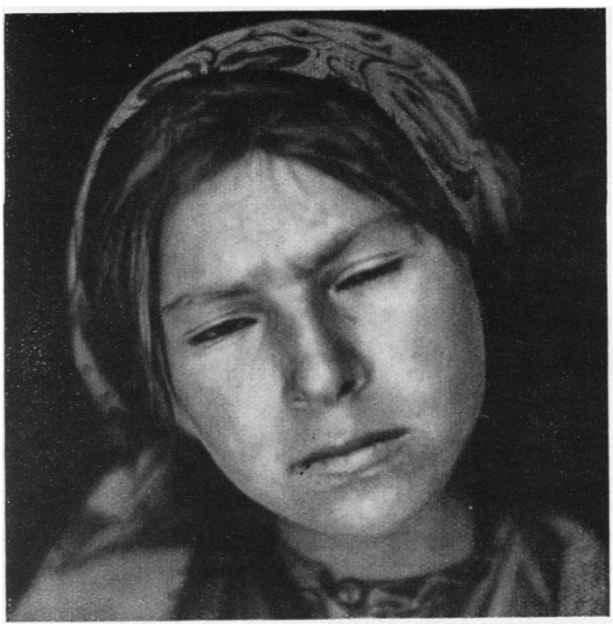
IX. (above): View over the roof of my home and workshop (below): Hassan (see p. 40)

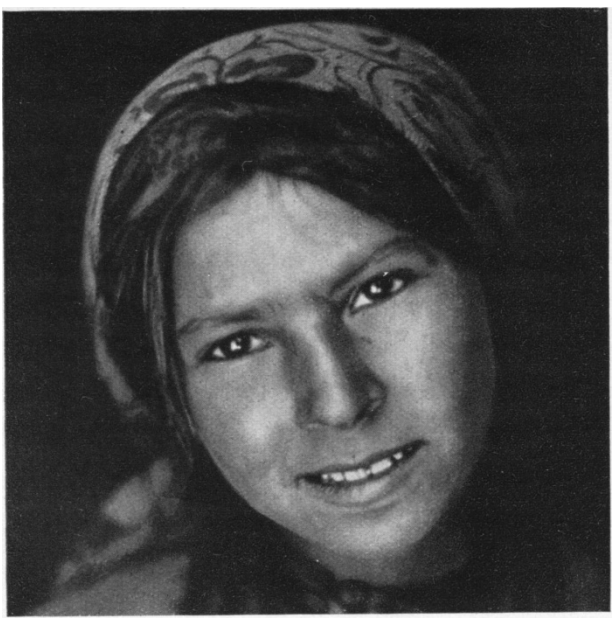
[40]/2 X.



Abu Hassan instructs his daughter to capture me with her eyes.

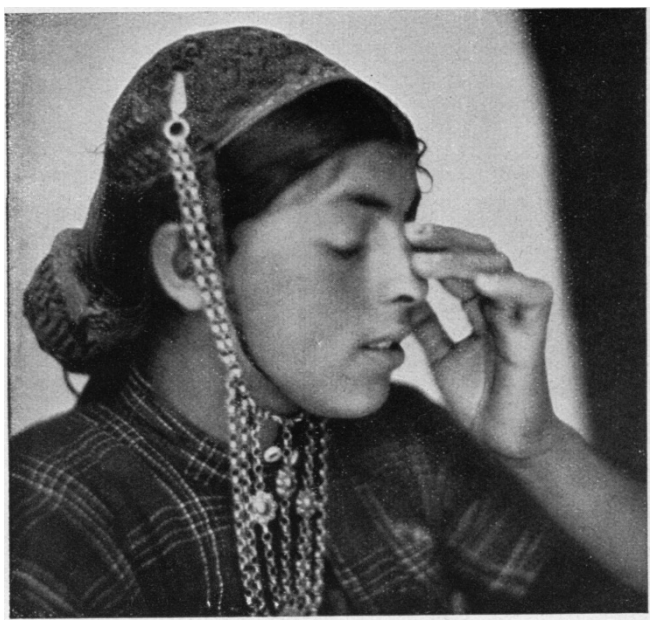
[40]/3 XI.

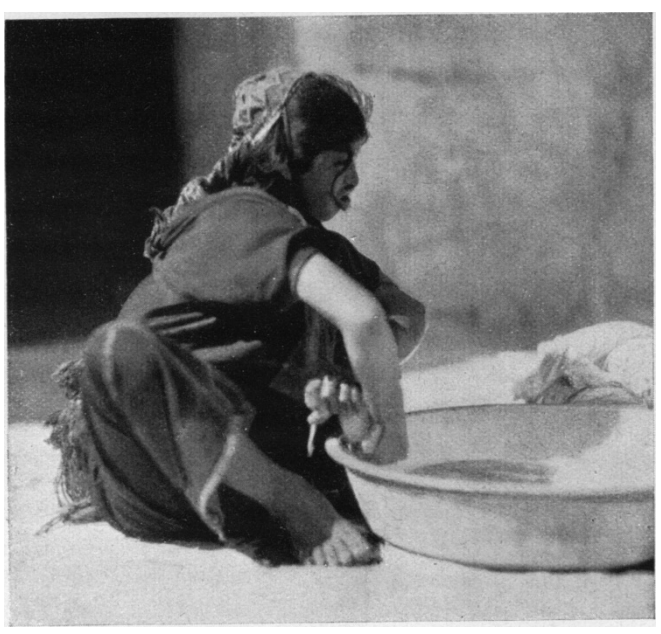




The daughter tries hard (see p. 43)

[40]/4 XII.





(above): Hamde sings (below): Muhammadiyah washes

[41]

Furthermore, it went against his own principles of decency and could not be tolerated. I reached for the hippopotamus whip, threw him out of the house, and cursed his father and his father's father and his entire tribe. I can still see the tall lout with the insolent face filling the high doorway of my house – he just kept opening his mouth but couldn't utter a sound. I said, "Why are you still stealing the daylight from me?" and raised the whip. Suddenly, the threshold was empty, and the morning sun lay on the stone tiles.

The next morning, long before sunrise, there was an urgent knocking at my door. I asked, "Who?" and received the answer, "Someone." I asked, "What kind of someone?" A deep, hesitant voice said, "One of the Arabs." That was Abu Hassan's voice, the father's. My curse had already taken effect. The case began to pique my curiosity. I shouted, “Why are you banging on my door? Beat your son instead, that would be better! What do you want?” – He replied, “Your well-being. I’m bringing the new garment.” I said, “Too late! It arrived yesterday and hasn’t gotten any newer since then. I’ll hang it at the mosque gate and put someone next to it to shout, ‘The Abedije made this for ten silver pieces!’” – He said, “Open up, open up! Truly, my son is a dog, and I beat him in the street in front of everyone until he fell down. Here is the garment. I’m putting it in front of your door and leaving!”

I waited a while and then opened the door. There, indeed, lay a white thobe, folded and wrapped in a cloth. And no one was in sight. I took the thing inside: it wasn’t brand new, but it was decent fabric and neatly made, and the whole thing had been carefully freshly washed. While I was examining it, I heard stealthy footsteps, and the keyhole darkened. After a while, there was a knock. I thought, Let him knock! and went back to my work. But he held out longer than I did. After fifteen minutes, I asked, “Who is it?” – He replied, “Someone – one of the Arabs, your neighbor! Give me a drink of water, I’m dying of thirst!” – Water drinkers often knocked at my door, because my house was the only one in the area that had anything resembling a water supply. All the others only had cisterns or nothing at all.

[42]

A cup was ready at my door for this purpose. I filled it, handed it out, and said, "Abu Hassan, it would be better for you to spare my door." He handed the cup to the side, and only then did I see that a ten-year-old girl was standing next to him, probably one of his many daughters. The girl drank and looked at me with undisguised hatred. The story promised to take a new turn. Was the old man offering me his daughter in marriage? That wasn't new in itself, but at this moment? Involuntarily, I looked at him questioningly, whereupon he said with a humbly hopeful grin, "That's my daughter, the youngest." She handed me the cup back, trying to disguise the hatred in her eyes with a sweet expression. I couldn't stop looking at the strange hideousness in the expression on this child's face. There was something in it that I didn't yet understand. I

only knew that I wouldn't rest until this expression was captured in a photograph. Only later, when I learned about the typical fate of such girls, did I understand the meaning of this expression.

It turned out that the old man wanted the first, inferior thobe back, after he had already given away the better one. I gladly gave him the inferior one. He also wanted the rag in which the second one had been wrapped. In the meantime, someone had entered my apartment. The rag was searched for and found with the peasant woman who served me. The distraction came in handy: I threw my Bedouin cloak over my shoulders, and under it I held the camera. The old man—made hopeful by entering my house and by my attention to his daughter—now tried to offer an additional payment. He didn't get it, but I got a series of revealing pictures, some of which I can present here.[1] You can see the old man gesturing to his daughter, urging her to entice me with her glances, [43] and you can see the daughter struggling, with varying degrees of success, to mask her hatred. After a while they left, hopeless, and have never honored me with their presence since.

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[1] See Plates X and XI of this book. Cf. also Picture 51 of my book "Race and Character" (Frankfurt a. M., 2nd ed., 1937; I, p. 94) and the related explanations about the world "as the place where the spoils fall to him who knows how to take them as a morsel from the hand of his God," i.e., the world as perceived by the desert dweller (Race and Character, I, 99 ff.).

[43]

6. Caves and Cave Dwellers

The new garment was soon to experience a strange initiation.

When I descended eastward from my dwelling into the valley, I passed a slope covered with graves. Just below this slope were two natural caves. Each, although it only had a few square meters of floor space, provided a comfortable dwelling for a family. When I rode down to the Sawāheret el-Wād (or Sawāhre for short) on my large black donkey, I liked to stop at these caves, brought the inhabitants a small gift, such as a pound of sugar or green coffee beans, and then drank a small cup of coffee before riding on. I liked the people very much; at first they were subdued and shy, but then cheerful and cordial. They themselves belonged to the Sawāhre tribe, and were therefore semi-Bedouins in an advanced stage of sedentarization: they had exchanged the tent for the cave, owned chickens and a few donkeys, for which a special cave served as a stable during the rainy season. Only settled and semi-settled people own donkeys, especially the farmers (fellahin) and sedentarized semi-Bedouins - and the Slefb, those hunter-nomads of non-Arab origin, who, however, only occur far east of the Jordan.[1] No full-blooded Bedouin uses the donkey as a riding animal: he would thereby degrade himself to the rank of a fellah in his own social hierarchy. The Sawāhre, however, are definitely donkey riders.[2] They claim to have been proper camel-riding Bedouins until the time of the war, but this is certainly a lie.

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[1] See p. 6.30.

[2] This does not apply to all semi-Bedouins in general. The Abu User, for example, neighbors of the Sawähre on this side of the Jordan River, possess considerable camel herds and breed pack camels.

[44]

Even the Rasha'i on the western shore of the Dead Sea, who still dress in purely Bedouin style and boast of a "noble lineage" from inner Arabia, must have been driven from the open steppe several generations ago.

I hadn't seen my cave-going friends for a long time, because in recent months I had been riding on other routes that didn't lead past the caves. But now I felt like showing them the new garment from Abu Hassan's tent for their expert appraisal. As I rode up to the caves, I was struck by the silence: no dogs barking, no children shouting, no chickens clucking. I dismounted and went in—not a living creature was to be seen. But that was only an illusion. A moment later, I realized that there was far too much life here. The air suddenly seemed to bubble like champagne or soda water, and as I looked down at myself, I saw how my new garment was becoming covered from the bottom up with blackish-brown spots that leaped out of the darkness. I fled outside, seeking refuge in the sun —too late! No amount of knocking or shaking helped, nor did throwing off my outer garments. I jumped on my donkey and stormed home. I climbed over the wall into my yard, threw off my clothes, and proceeded to commit chemical mass murder against thousands upon thousands of greedy enemies. In some Arabic grammar book, the sentence "The fleas ate me alive" is given as an example. No one understands what they haven't experienced themselves. The sentence had remained foreign and ridiculous to me. Now I understood it. My cave companions had certainly endured much in this regard, but at one point even they had had enough. They fled from the fleas into newly erected tents. I visited them there and said, "Since you proudly call yourselves nomads, the earth has refused to grant you a permanent dwelling. Nomads belong in

tents, not in caves and houses." They laughed and agreed with me. A little later, they built themselves a miserable fellah hut out of fieldstones. Once the sedentary lifestyle has gripped someone, there is no helping them. One transforms from a nomad to a semi-nomad, and from a semi-nomad to a settled person; then one falls under the spell of the city, into the shadow of the West, and becomes "proletariat."

[45]

These people were already close to completion.

There are few insects in the tents, actually only lice. But these, like their Bedouin hosts, adhere to strict rules of communal life and therefore, compared to fleas and bedbugs, act as well-mannered tent companions. You know where to look for them and how to get rid of them. You can rely on them.

7. The Trousers of Hebron

One day I thought I had learned enough about my future role as a Bedouin and decided to set off for Transjordan. However, I had to consider that it was already autumn and winter was approaching.

In winter, it gets cold enough even on the high plateaus of northern Arabia, although the freezing point is not reached every night. But people sleep there in tents or, if they are traveling, under the open sky. My transition from the semi-Bedouin tribes of the scorching Jordan Valley, which reaches down to 400 meters below sea level near the Dead Sea, to a full Bedouin tribe whose grazing areas extend to altitudes of 700 and 800 meters up to the borders of the Wahhabi state, therefore required some adjustment in clothing. Above all, a sheepskin coat was necessary, like the ones the Bedouin wear during the winter rains. So I went to Hebron, which is now called al-Khalil. The bazaar of this city has a reputation for offering particularly useful sheepskin coats. It goes without saying that I went shopping dressed as a Bedouin: if only because then the goods are offered closer to their actual price – not at three or four times the amount, as they would be offered to a European. The purchase went well: I acquired a huge coat into which I can completely roll myself up to sleep. It proved to be very reliable, and I still own it today. It cost a little over one and a half Palestinian gold pounds (about 33 Reichsmarks).

[46] Following this purchase, something happened that I want to recount here, because it offers various insights, particularly into the mutual perceptions of the different Arab population groups in Western Arab countries and their current relationship with the West. Encouraged by my success, I decided to buy another pair of trousers. An Arab pair of trousers, of course: tight at the calves, where they end, but with a wide, flowing fullness at the seat. Bedouins don't wear such trousers; in fact, they don't wear any at all. However, I was thinking about the winter again, and besides, the Bedouin thobe, which is like a shirt, reaches almost to the ankles; what's underneath is nobody's business.

I asked the fur trader where I could buy trousers: sturdy, dark blue trousers made of strong fabric. He nodded understandingly and pointed down the narrow bazaar alley: the fifth shop on the same side was the right one. I left the fur coat with the trader for the time being, strolled down the alley, and found what I was looking for: a tiny room, like all the stalls in the bazaar, piled high with fabrics and ready-made goods, closed off at the front by the counter, on or behind which the merchant squats. This one was squatting on a stool, engrossed in his ledger. In front of the stall, a second man was bent over the same book, doing calculations. It was clearly a strenuous task for both of them. I stepped forward and said, "Peace be upon you, and I want to buy a pair of trousers!" - Nothing happened; the merchant didn't even glance at me. And yet I was wearing my red coat from Damascus and a silk headscarf. After a while I said, "Hey, Uncle! It's getting late, and my tent is far away. I want a pair of trousers like those there. Hurry up!" - Then he reached behind him, took a pair of trousers of the desired kind, and threw them at me without looking up. I picked up the item, examined the fabric with a knowing look (which was all in vain, as he didn't even notice me), and asked for the price. He said, "Forty-five" (to be understood as piastres), which was too much, but not much too much, and I made a counteroffer. He said again, "Forty-five."

[1] 45 Palestinian gold piastres are slightly over 9 Reichsmarks.

[47]

And I said, "That's too much." To which he (still without looking up) replied, "Then give them back!" I threw the goods at his head and said, "There are strange merchants in El-Khalil! May God burn down your house and your father's house and your father's father's house!" - Which is what every Arab says in such a case, and it left him completely unmoved.

Just as I was about to leave, two effendis came along: dressed in European clothes except for the red fez with the black tassel, shaved and perfumed, one even wearing pince-nez on a black cord. And behold, the face of my merchant was transformed, and words like rose oil flowed from his lips: "Would you be so kind as to enter, my servants! Everything

is for you alone, I would break down my house for you!" The two smiled sweetly and pranced on their way. Hardly had they gone when the merchant suddenly reverted to his former demeanor.

From the mosque came the call to the afternoon prayer. I followed, approached the house of God, and performed the prescribed ablutions and prayers there. Then I returned to my fur merchant and said, "O my brother! Your friend has plenty of trousers, but he won't sell me any. He only sells to European-obsessed effendis, but he doesn't even thank a Bedouin for his greeting. I am very surprised by such customs." He looked at me for a long time and muttered to himself, then he said, "Is this Your Grace's first time in El-Khalil?" I said, "No, but it will be my last. I will tell you a secret. You may think I am from the Ta'amire or the Rashaide tribe, but you are mistaken." He vehemently denied it: "The Ta'âmire are beggars and the Raschâide are thieves, but you are one of the great ones, perhaps from beyond the Jordan." He said this softly and cautiously, so that no one but me would hear it, but—or so it seemed—with conviction. By "the great ones," he apparently meant full-blooded Bedouin from Transjordan. After this exchange, I made an attempt that could hardly harm my future work, for I had no further plans in Hebron. I wanted to see the trouser seller's face when he learned that he had been dealing with a real European.

[48] He had chased me away from his counter. So I said, "I came from Germany because I love the Arabs. I wanted..." I couldn't get any further.

The furrier climbed over his counter and respectfully asked me to follow him. He walked with me to the trousers seller's shop, quickly approached him, grabbed him by the shoulders, and whispered something in his ear. The man jumped up and stared at me as if I were the devil. Then he leaped over the counter and grabbed my hand to kiss it. I pulled it back and said, "I don't want your kiss, I want to buy a pair of trousers." Then he jumped back, grabbed the trousers, offered them to me with both hands, and exclaimed, "Take them, they are yours, may God bless them! I won't take a single piaster for them!" Meanwhile, a semicircle of onlookers had gathered around the shop. I said, "What a shame! Then take your goods back, for I will not accept a gift from a man who despises the Arabs." I listened to see if there was any applause from the semicircle of onlookers, among whom were fellahin and semi-Bedouins, but no one said a word. I continued, "The trousers may be worth 25 piasters. I'll pay 30, here they are." He gladly accepted them. But as I turned to leave, he grabbed my hand again to kiss it, and when I resisted, he said, "I won't let you go until you have forgiven me!" Then my patience snapped, and my voice grew louder: "You're making things worse and worse! As long as I was just a simple Arab to you, you wouldn't even return my greeting. For those two effendis, those European monkeys, you were ready to tear your house apart, and now, in front of me, the European, you're acting like a slave. I came from Europe because I love the Arabs; I wanted to see your customs and traditions. By God, I see them! When it comes to cheating foreigners out of a few pennies, you're all united: like countless buttocks in a single pair of trousers![1] (And with that, I swung the trousers I had just bought.) But the foreigners are smarter. They try to convince you that their Franconian clothing, their Franconian chairs and furniture are more elegant and better – so that you will buy all of it from them.

[1] In Arabic, they say, "You are two buttocks in one pair of trousers," which is equivalent to our "You're all in cahoots."

[49]

And you buy it, and the others laugh and grow fat at your expense. When I came here from the West, I hated your Frankish oppressors, for they are destroying the beauty and customs of the East. But now I know why they despise you: because you do not respect yourselves. You are Arabs and you despise Arabs and grovel before everything foreign!"

It came from my heart, and I had really worked myself into a fervor. The trousers merchant took this moment to kiss my hand two or three times.

8. Setting Out to Meet the True Bedouin

I had believed that I could no longer learn anything fundamentally new from the settled people and semi-Bedouin, at least nothing concerning the Bedouin themselves. I was mistaken: I did learn something new from them after all, and precisely with regard to the Bedouin.

In a few weeks, the first winter rains would have to fall. This rain brings about the great turning point in Bedouin life every year. The steppe, parched by the summer, then turns green: clumps of herbs and hardy shrubs sprout here and there between the shimmering flinty surface and offer almost abundant nourishment for the vast herds of 0.ies. Now begins the eastward movement of the great nomadic tribes of Transjordan, who graze westward in the latter part of the summer at the edge of the cultivated land. There they themselves own extensive areas of arable land. But a true Bedouin never touches a plow to cultivate the land himself. Not even the Bedouin slave does that. Farming is the business of the peasants, hence the name! The peasants come from far and wide to cultivate the fields of the Bedouin landowners: even from

Palestine, for example, from the area of el-Khalil, the city of Abraham, the ancient Hebron.[1] According to my sources:

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[1] El-Challl means "the friend". This refers to Obrahlm (Abraham), the "friend of God".

[50]

Among my peasant friends were some who every year went as field laborers to the Beni Sakhr tribe to cultivate their fields in the area west of the ruined steppe castle of El-Mshatta, whose facade – or at least its most beautiful, best-preserved part – the Turkish Sultan, to whom it did not belong, had once given as a gift to the last German Emperor.[1]

I therefore could not go to this area if I wanted to play the role of an unknown Bedouin from a distant tribe, because those peasants knew part of my non-Bedouin past. On the other hand, I couldn't stray too far from my workshop near Jerusalem, at least not at first, because I needed to secure a collection of flawless photographic images before the films and equipment could fall victim to the influences of Bedouin life. I knew that my non-Bedouin baggage would make the execution of my role very difficult. I would have preferred to leave it behind at the beginning and retrieve it secretly later. But travel costs money, and I only had a modest amount. Moreover, a scientific undertaking of the kind I was planning is always half an adventure, and it is in the nature of adventure that one does not know its outcome precisely in advance. But the pictures, the pictures of the "inner life" of the free nomads, were crucial: they were to serve in the future both as proof of work accomplished and as material for further psychological analysis.

I initially planned to travel around the southern end of the Dead Sea through the Wadi el-Araba to the Howeitat tribe and to stay with them first and then with the Beni Sakhr. The grazing grounds of the Beni Sakhr extend into the hinterland of Amman, the capital of Transjordan, from where a passable road leads down to the Jordan Valley. From there, a good, new road leads to Jerusalem. In this way, I was able to bring my photographic spoils to my workshop whenever the opportunity arose.

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[1] Today, it is a showpiece of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin.

[51]

On the map, it all looked almost straightforward. The map shows so many roads, paths, and places with proper names – one would expect a neatly painted sign at their entrance and exit, indicating the responsible authority, and a red-bordered speed limit sign: "Vehicles over 5.5 tons - 15 km/h!" Why didn't I simply take a carriage to Amman and then continue on to the grazing lands of the Beni Sakhr? I laughed at this thought at the time, not knowing that I would actually do just that one day.

Transjordan is a supposedly independent Arab principality, a British post-war creation. Even at the Jordan River bridge, which connects Transjordan with Palestine, the foreigner is under surveillance, and this surveillance then becomes a constant state. The foreigner is required to register at every gendarmerie post along his route. The reason given is the insecurity of the roads. Almost all the roads lie within the sphere of influence of Bedouin life and customs, which include raiding. But England must have other reasons for surveilling foreigners besides just concern for their safety. I had been told a lot about the espionage activities of the English political police, who have highly paid informants among the Bedouin of all Transjordanian tribes. The thought of this espionage system was far more unsettling to me than the prospect of falling prey to a Bedouin raid. If the political police had their eyes on me, my incognito, my Bedouin role, and my "mimetic method" would soon be over! So, the paramount principle was: remain as inconspicuous as possible.

Hence the route around the southern end of the Dead Sea. On the map, it looks like any other road. The Arabs call it Derb el-Maut, the Road of Death, a name that cannot be found on any map. The Wadi el-Araba is impassable for anyone unfamiliar with the area, because they won't find the few hidden water sources and will therefore die of thirst. For these and other reasons, they are entirely dependent on the goodwill of the Bedouin tribes whose grazing lands they traverse. To put it briefly: in my case, [52] they didn't want to. I pretended to be someone who came from "the other side," from beyond the lowlands and the Dead Sea. That almost didn't turn out well for me, because those tribes are currently engaged in a blood feud with those "over there"—something none of my friends had told me until then (out of ignorance, politeness, malicious pleasure, or all of the above). For this time, I had to turn back. Incidentally, the Howeitât, to whom I initially wanted to go, are also in a blood feud with the Beni Sakhr. I was aware of this, but I had underestimated the difficulty of getting from one of these tribes to the other. I had taken some things too lightly, and others certainly too seriously.

9. The Magic Barrier

I now decided to cross the Jordan to the east, but—of course—not over the bridge near Jericho, which is monitored by the police and customs officials. The goal was to "cut the water," i.e., to cross the river at a shallow point north of the bridge. This ford was, of course, only known to the locals. But my dear old friends, the Sawāheret el-Wād, belonged to them—so there was no problem finding the right path!

In the meantime, it had become clear to me that I also needed one of them as a companion "over there," and specifically one who still expected a lot from me and was therefore dependent on me: this seemed to me to be a guarantee that he would keep the secret of my all-too-Western origins over there. I needed someone who would represent me wherever I couldn't be myself; for example, he should guard my tent and luggage in my absence. Now it was a matter of choosing the right person. It shouldn't be one of the talkative ones, but a silent, cautious man. I already knew who it should be. His name was Id, he was a quiet, reasonably reliable man with the facial expression of a dog whose master has died.

[53] However, the first task was to find him. He was a poor wretch and helped out here and there with the harvest for meager compensation. The Sawähre are "settled" people and cultivate some grain. Simply asking about him was out of the question. There is no more effective driving force in the lives of these people than envy and jealousy. If you have two of them in front of you and speak to one, the second becomes increasingly jealous, eventually loses control, and then behaves completely contrary to his own rules of etiquette. If you turn to the second one, the same thing happens with the first. You have to constantly pay attention to these things and employ a special kind of social tact to interact with these "primitive" people somewhat smoothly. If I had simply asked about Id's whereabouts, I would have stirred up a hornet's nest. The entire tribe would have become agitated by the question: What does he want with him? Countless intermediaries would have intruded on my plans and sabotaged my connection with the man before it even materialized. So there was nothing left to do but casually inquire in conversation about where he might be, and then search for him myself.

So I rode through the Sawähre territory once again, from one encampment to another. I loved the black "tents," these huts made of thick, rough goat hair fabric stretched over massive poles with long ropes—I loved these huts, but I had already had quite enough of the people in them, the Sawähre. They all look wild and dangerous, squinting one eye and then the other, but it's all empty posturing, and basically they are quite harmless. They are simply half-Bedouin, quarter-Bedouin, tenth-Bedouin. Only the facade of Bedouin life remains, but there is nothing left behind it. Consider the two heads on our Plate XV and compare their expressions, for example, with that of the full-blooded Bedouin shown on our Plate XVII: the latter is dangerous, the former are merely pretending. What a striking profile is shown in Plate XV (lower image), and yet this very image provides a prime example of what I have called a facade. Incidentally, even this kind of superficial behavior is now only found among a few of [54] the Palestinian semi-Bedouin tribes; in the others, even the facade has already crumbled. I was tired of dealing with these ghosts and longed for real Bedouin life.

I rode from morning till evening. Before each encampment, I had to dismount to have a coffee chat in the sheikh's tent. In the evening, I reached my husband and stayed the night in the camp where I found him. The task was to subtly draw him away from the others and then negotiate with him privately. But that takes time. First come the ceremonial greetings, then the sound of the coffee mortar mixes with the conversation. In the background, a young goat is slaughtered for dinner to honor the guest. In my own role, this would have hurt me, because the lively animal might have been closer to me than these people. But I was immersed in the atmosphere of my burgeoning Bedouin identity. I was thirsty and drank from the earthenware water jug that was available to everyone, tilting my head back, opening my mouth, holding the long spout of the jug above it, and skillfully pouring the water down my throat. That's how the men drink there, and there's something of an emphasis on masculinity in this way of drinking, similar to the "beer boys" of German students in the past. I never saw women drink with this gurgling method, and even the smaller boys simply stick the spout of the jug into their snotty little noses. Once my thirst was quenched, I became hungry like a true Bedouin.

But I knew it would be a while before I got anything to eat. The tent consists of a men's and a women's section, separated only by a low wall made of goat hair fabric. I could follow the preparation of dinner by ear from the men's section, because I knew what each sound meant. I had sometimes sat with the women and watched them, while telling them all sorts of stories. Strictly speaking, this isn't customary, but the honored neighborly guest can afford to do so. Now I heard from over there the pounding of the laban chunks: the female counterpart to the pounding of coffee in the mortar, which is reserved for the men.

[55] Läbän is sour milk. It is skimmed, dried into hard lumps, and stored in sacks. As needed, these lumps are placed in a wooden bowl, covered with water, and crushed and ground with a stone. Meanwhile, one of the girls has piled thistles and dry brushwood by the hearth, lit them, and placed the entrails of the slaughtered animal on the fire. Then the cooking pot, resting on stones, is placed over them. It contains the liver water with the fresh meat.

The burning entrails produce a tremendous amount of smoke and stench, which—if the wind so desires—permeates the men's quarters. But it heralds something edible and is therefore readily endured. Various sounds drift over while the men—some squatting with their legs crossed, others propped up on their arms and lying on their stomachs—pass the tiny coffee cups, chatting and waiting. A terrible scream suddenly shrills through the dividing wall, lasts for a while, then diminishes and stops. No one pays it any attention. What could have happened? A taller girl hit her little sister, both to show off her strength and because the little one was standing in a convenient position for the blow. One can hear young animals of all kinds and sizes being fed in the women's quarters: donkeys are being given barley, while kids and lambs roam about, and chickens and chicks wander everywhere, even though they are constantly being chased away. Chickens are, after all, very un-Dounish animals, and the main animal of the Arab nomads, the dromedary, is almost entirely absent among the Sawahre. They are, after all, "rustic."

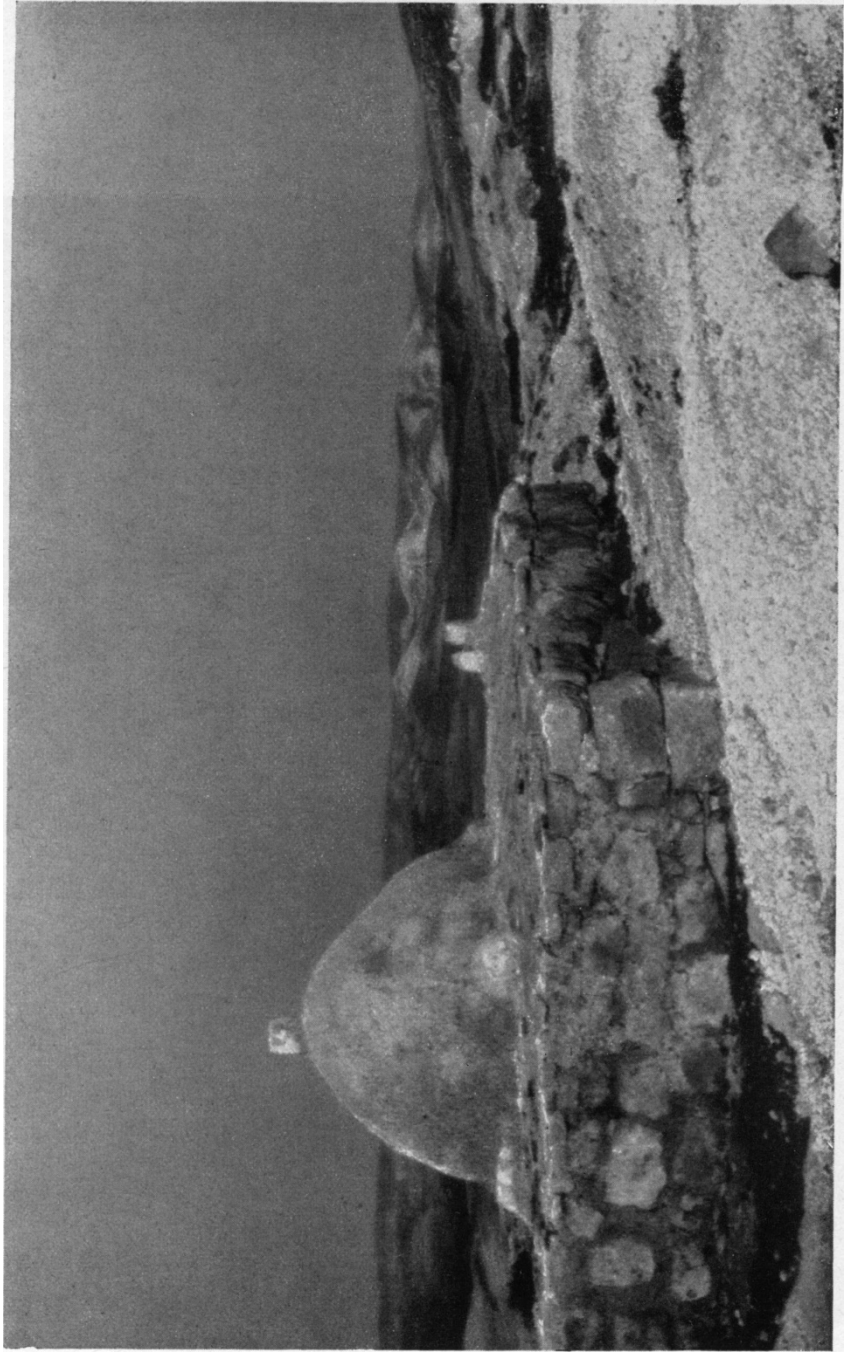
Since they have almost no camels, and certainly no riding camels, they also lack the high riding saddle that serves as an armrest in a genuine Bedouin tent. My luggage, the filled saddlebags, and my large sheepskin coat, which served as an arm and headrest, had been piled up at my camp. From this pile, I pulled out a small bag full of Yemeni coffee beans and handed it to the tent owner and coffee steward. He wordlessly and with a smile, without thanks, placed it in a long sack. A pleasant sense of calm spread across the faces of the tent's inhabitants: the lifeblood was flowing into them.

[56] I will not run out of coffee in the next few days. Furthermore, it is now certain that my visit will not harm my hosts for the time being, since the sachet of coffee costs 32-37 piastres of gold (around 7 marks) and is thus considerably more valuable than the slaughtered kid goat.

And finally, a shout rings out from the women's quarters. Two men jump up and seize a simple rug, like the ones the women there are weaving, and hurry over. There, they slide the large, circular copper bowl onto the rug and drag it across to the men's quarters, holding the rug by its four corners. Now the steaming feast stands before me. I bend my right knee, pull back my right sleeve, and tuck the right corner of my headscarf backward under the headband. Now I ask the tent master, who is squatting opposite me, to join me in sharing the meal. After a few polite refusals, he comes and places the fattiest pieces before me. The chunks of meat should ideally be layered in the steaming rice: the fattiest on top, the leanest a layer deeper, and the worst at the very bottom. But there isn't much to distribute on a kid goat, so soon all the meat was in front of me. I handed him some good chunks, but he just tore them apart with his fingers and then put them back in front of me. Soon, however, we were both in full swing: we dipped our right hands into the rice, onto which someone was pouring hot butter from a bowl; we made balls of rice—the hot fat oozing between our fingers—and popped them into our mouths. Not a word was spoken. A deep hollow formed in the rice before each of us, and the delicious chunks of meat dwindled more and more. In the middle of the bowl, at the top of the rice mound, sat the kid goat's skull, sticking out its tongue and staring at me with hollow eyes. We eagerly throw the gnawed bones toward the center of the bowl. In the background, the second round of eaters is already waiting. Finally, I rise and release the bowl, which is then instantly surrounded.

While the tent owner and I lick our right hands, a young man arrives with a dirty cloth, a water jug, and soap.

[56]/1

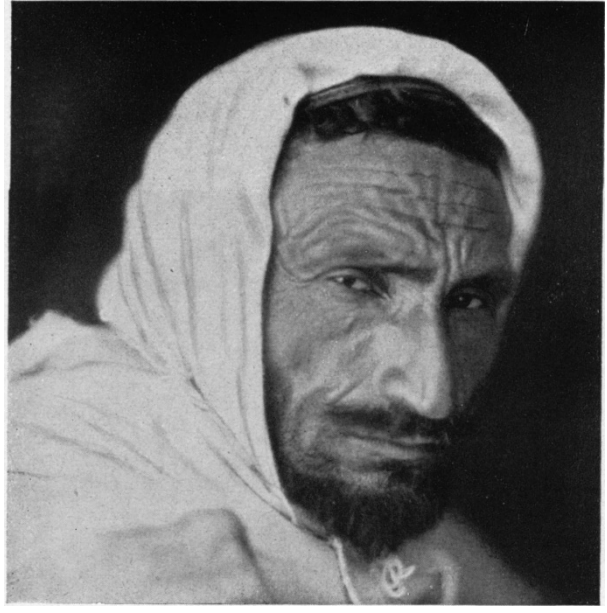


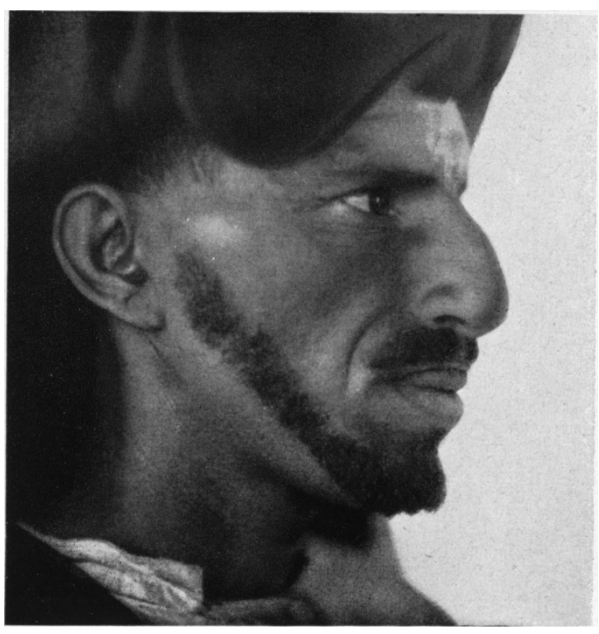
XIII. Grave on the edge of the Judean Desert

[56]/2

XIV. 'Id sings and plays the rabab

[56]/3 XV.





(above): 'Id on the way to the Jordan (p. 59) (below): The other failure (p. 63)

[56]/4

XVI. Manwa, who was destined to be my bride (p. 66)

[57] I squat down on the ground in front of the tent; he pours water over my hands as needed, hands me the soap, takes it back, and hands me the towel. Meanwhile, sounds of contentment could be heard from the dish: the smacking and the customary belches owed to the host as expressions of satisfaction and gratitude. Between these sounds, bones and bone fragments cracked and flew toward the center of the dish. Finally, the diners rose one after another, and the third round, that of the least respected eaters, pressed forward. What they left behind was then passed over as the women's share: swirling piles of rice and gnawed bones of the first quality, that is, with remnants of meat. The bare, second-quality bones were for the dogs.

After the supper, the hour of night prayer had come. The old tent master spread his cloak in the direction of Mecca and stepped forward to pray. I let him go first and joined him behind, along with some of the older

men. The young men did not pray. Then I spied Od, the man I was looking for, who was bringing a jug of water in case anyone needed ablution. I said to him, “Come, Id, pray with me!” He left the jug and came over. After the prayer, I managed to get him to step aside unnoticed. Afterward, he stood there for a moment longer because he saw them inside piling the carpets and blankets in the direction of Mecca: in the direction of prayer, but not for prayer, rather for nighttime rest, that is, for chatting and sleeping. He should have helped with this task; it was expected of someone of his low rank. But since I held him with my eyes, he stayed and looked up at me with the sadly resigned gaze of a dog that has lost its master.

I said, “O Id, your life is hard and your earnings are meager. I know something better for you. Make a deal!” He looked around, pricked up his ears, checked all sides, and then said, "God bless you!" After a while, I continued, "I'm riding home tomorrow. Come with me. Then you'll hear more." He offered me his hand and, with lowered eyes, solemnly said, "By God, I'm coming," and perhaps at that moment he believed he would come. But I knew the tone and knew now: that wasn't how it would work.

[58] He was not allowed to ride out of the camp with me, otherwise the tribe's envy would turn on the poor man. He wasn't one of the respected ones, for he owned nothing but a mule. Had I chosen one of the wealthy and influential, the others would eventually calm down. But him? They would simply forbid him from riding with me, and in his place, two loudmouths would come along and talk me into submission. I pressed a silver coin into his hand and said, “I will leave the camp tomorrow after morning prayers. I will take your mule with me; it will carry my luggage. I like to ride unburdened. Let the sun set once more, but before it rises again, early in the morning, knock on my door. And bring a second, strong mule—I don't care who it belongs to. I pay fair wages, not like the peasants do.” He said, “By my head and eye! May God increase your wealth! Truly, you are one of the great ones!” Now there was some prospect that he would come.

I rode home in the morning with the two animals, and the following day Id came—not until the afternoon, but he came nonetheless. He brought a mule with him, a strong black mare.

When I told him of my intention to "cut the water to visit Beni Sachr on the other side," he was silent for a long time, looked at me sadly, and then lowered his eyes. Finally, he opened his mouth for a solemn speech. "O Sheikh of the Germans," he said, "do not cross the Jordan! The Bedouins of the East are not like us; they are robbers and murderers. As soon as you leave the police road, you are already dead. You don't see them: they sit behind the stones and shoot you! Behind every stone sits a man with a rifle." I simply said, "I'm sorry—for the poor stones!" and laughed heartily. But that didn't move him. Then I became serious again and said, "They may shoot, but they don't hit their target. Only the German rifles always hit their mark." At that, he jumped up: "That's the thing: they have German rifles and shoot like the German Bedouins!" Then the laughter returned, at least for me, and I said: "Well then, we'll just do a little shooting! That's what rifles are for."

[59] In the morning we set off with the three animals. I made sure that we never touched a Sahrawi encampment. We hadn't encountered a single person since yesterday morning: just as I had wanted! Not to meet any of the Sahrawi, not a single Sahuri! If I succeeded in this, my companion would remain with me. I rode ahead, followed by the pack animal, then Id on one of the mules. And so it went, hour after hour. The sun rose and the heat gushed from the ground. Like a thousand stony breasts, the mountainous steppe stretched out, the "Desert of Judah": yellow and reddish, scree and more scree, between which the hooves of the riding and pack animals treaded, and everything pearled and shimmered in the movement of the heated air. It was as if the stony waves rose and fell, endlessly, towards the bluish abyss, which we approached as if in a dream. The blue wall over there, beyond the lowlands, becomes increasingly fragmented and sometimes dissolves in the deceptive shimmering air. At one point I turn around and no longer see my companion alone: beside him walks a second man, they speak softly, and I see that it is a Sahuri. But before I can say anything, he turns without a greeting and is gone. I say nothing and ride on.

When we camp by the Jordan in the evening, my companion looks like a sick dog waiting to be beaten. We go to bed early, for under the cover of night we are to cross the Jordan. When I get up after a few hours, the mules have disappeared, and so has my companion. My luggage is there, and my large black donkey.

But my friend Id, the silent one, increasingly troubled, is shown in our Plates XIV and XV (top image).

10. The Fear of the Half-Body

I had expected this course of events ever since that Sahüri had appeared at my companion's side. What was I supposed to do? I couldn't see where any particular danger was threatening me at the moment, so I lay down again and slept until morning.

[60] I found myself in the territory of a strange half-Bedouin tribe calling themselves el-Abld. Abid means both slave and Negro, and they are both: willing servants with dark skin and an unmistakable Negro appearance. How such people came to the Jordan Valley and form a semi-nomadic tribe there is not entirely clear from a historical perspective. That morning, I was most concerned with the question of whether they would be willing to guide me across the ford, which they undoubtedly knew as well. I concluded that this was hardly to be expected, since they did not know me, and crossing the ford was, after all, "forbidden" and made anyone who attempted it suspicious. Those who did not use the bridge located a little further south must have had a reason. But even if someone took me across and provided the pack animals, it was almost certain that he would later betray me—even if unintentionally, just to show off—by saying that an unknown Bedouin had cut the water with such-and-such luggage. And eventually, this story would reach the bridge guards and from there the Transjordanian police. Then I would be hunted game on unknown paths. So I loaded all my luggage onto the black donkey's back and began my retreat on foot. The donkey was the last friend who had truly stayed with me—or at least that's how he seemed to me. And yet, on the other side, I was only allowed to use him as a pack animal and perhaps not even take him all the way to Beni Sachr, because that would damage my reputation among the full Bedouins.

This time, I didn't avoid the tents of the Sawai. I considered it my duty to test how the Sawai, and especially my missing companion, would react if they suddenly saw me again. I expected to meet a large gathering at Jebel el-Muntår in the camp where I had found the Id. And so it came to pass.

I advanced slowly, for it was uphill and on foot. I first traveled through the territory of Abu User and Hetemat, none of whom knew me. Only on the second evening of my retreat did I reach Saähre huts, but I passed by unseen until, at the time of night prayers, I came upon the large camp.

[61] I reached el Muntår. The dogs barked louder than I liked. I left my donkey with the luggage, tying its halter around a large stone; then I attached the buttstock to my large Mauser pistol, took off the safety, and strode quickly toward the tent—the same tent where I had stayed as a guest a few days before. My face was veiled up to my eyes.

Now they threw thistles and brushwood into the fire, which flared up and illuminated the gathering—my heart rejoiced: there sat my friend Id! And beside him, the fellow who had fetched him.

But now the firelight leaped up at me, and suddenly everyone stood and shouted: “Who’s there? Who’s there?” I cried: “An enemy! Lay down your possessions, and your lives will be spared![1] But you are safe from the raid of the German Bedouins!” Then they said: “By God, it is Muhammad Ferid!”

For a while we stood facing each other in silence, then I approached the circle. They parted to let me through and pointed to the seat of honor. There I slowly sat down and placed my firearm in front of me. I thought: How beautifully they can be silent! And finally I said: "How beautifully you can be silent! You usually love to talk so much." I was curious whether they would offer me coffee. But the coffee pots—there were only two, and not proper Bedouin ones—were placed close to me in front of the seat of honor, right at the muzzle of my weapon. Finally, the old tent master rose, took one of the pots, poured me some coffee, and offered me the cup: "Peace be with you!" I simply said, "I don't drink with traitors." He stood there for a long time, holding out the cup to me. Finally, a fellow who had been sitting impassively, a half-wit, a village simpleton, reached for it. He drank it down.

They sat around looking angry and embarrassed. The matter seemed to be dragging on, so I said, "Don't look so angry, you tailless dogs, you fake Bedouins! You don’t need to prove to me with the corners of your eyes that you are scoundrels – I already know that.”

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[1] A fixed formula that is shouted to the apostate: "üqschutu wislamu!"

[62]

And they still had nothing to say, by God. Only the simpleton sipped his coffee.

Then I looked Id in the eye and said, "Id, why did you sneak away from me, you jackal?" ("You jackal!" is "yah wawi!" in Arabic.) Id opened his mouth and was about to say something when suddenly the simpleton jumped up and shouted countless times, "Yah wawi! yah wawi! wawi!" and laughed and howled like a jackal. Finally, he started to dance with his belly and howled, "Yah wawi!"

Now the spell was broken, and someone said, "That simpleton will lead you across the Jordan!" With that, he gave him a push so that he went flying. Some tried to stop him, others wanted to laugh. I said: “There isn’t a single one of you here who isn’t a simpleton. Up to the Jordan, you’re simpletons with half a brain, but there, the sight of the water robs you of even that meager half. Even the wild boars of the lowlands

dare to cross the water, yet you are worse than the boars!" I said this without passion, in the tone of a matter-of-fact statement. This was not the Arab style of rebuke: an Arab would have, with considerable effort of passionate gesture, cursed the object of his affection with those ever-available, fixed incantations: May God burn your father! May He make your eyes white (i.e., may He blind you!) and worse. But now, for once, I disdained conforming to the style of my companions and adversaries. I wanted to test whether there was still a sensitive sense of honor to be struck in these hardened souls. I should never have offered such a thing to Transjordanian Bedouins; they would have instantly… They weren't slain, but they rose and stepped out of the fire's light, apparently withdrawing for some kind of consultation. Only Id remained seated, like a dog waiting for a stone or a kick. But I just looked close past him, as if he were invisible. After a while, they returned and squatted by the fire. Some were missing, among them the simpleton. Id walked away and disappeared into the shadows.

[63] All that surrounded me now were "dignitaries." Finally, one of them spoke: "Listen, O Sheikh of the Germans! Why have you chosen the worst among us? Choose a good one!"

I considered this. So the people were making me an offer. Was this merely to save face, or did someone truly want to cross the Jordan with me? Should I accept and descend into the lowlands again, just to test their intentions? After all, it was part of my research task to investigate such matters, so I said: "And who is this good one?" They pointed to the man with the prominent, distinctive nose: the man with the imposing face we had seen earlier[1]. Well, I was prepared to draw this dud as well.

They brought my donkey, unloaded its baggage, piled it at the head of the camp where they had prepared a place for me, and gave me something to eat. It was too late for a proper supper: life flows evenly in such tents, not according to a clock, but at the pace of the day. I hardly expected anything truly edible, only "salt and bread," the symbol of peace. But lo and behold: they brought me a proper omelet, along with tea made from semi-dried mint leaves and a great deal of sugar in it—by God, they were diligently striving for my reconciliation! I didn't allow any nighttime chatter; I lay down to sleep, and the others, willingly or unwillingly, did the same. I slept in fits and starts, often interrupted by the braying of the donkeys, the barking of the dogs, the squawking and wailing of the infants over in the women's quarters, and the mothers' lullabies that then resumed tirelessly again and again. Morning announced itself with the departure of the girls: they loaded the large water skins partly onto donkeys, partly onto their own backs, and set off for the distant watering hole. The woman in charge of the tent checks the tent pegs, drives the loose ones more firmly into the ground with a field stone, and tightens the ropes. Now it is time for the guest to depart.

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[1] Lower image on Plate XV.

[64] Abd er-Risäk, the man with the distinctive face, appears with my donkey and two pack animals. I perform my ablutions and morning prayer and mount up. We ride off without saying goodbye, long before sunrise.

Abd er-Risäk, usually quite talkative, became silent and dejected. The closer we got to the Jordan, the more his face resembled that of my first companion. In the evening, when we made camp, he solemnly began to speak: "Turn back, O Sheikh of the German Bedouins—what do you want beyond the Jordan? Truly, that is the land of murderers! You ride and do not see them, but they see you. Behind every stone sits a man with a rifle." With that, he himself jumped behind a boulder and mimicked the motion of shooting. I said: "Strange, now you look like Id, the sick dog. I had believed that your tribe was the best, and now I see that it is the most cowardly of all."

He was silent for a while, then started again: "Turn back, O Sheikh of the German Bedouins!"—This strangely honorable title, too, was born of Id's fear and his legacy—a valuable legacy, as it later turned out. How different in character and appearance the two had been before, Id and Abd er-Risäk, and now they resembled each other down to the smallest detail—so much so that my memory later sometimes confused the two, and I needed my pictures and notes to separate them again. “Turn back,” said Abd er-Risäk, “don’t cross the Jordan! Your life is safe with us; we have order in the land and a good government. There is no government over there. Truly, they will slaughter you! I said, “Indeed, you speak like a fellah. The German Bedouins are true Bedouins, not like you. They are brothers of those over there. No one will harm me there.”

I lay down and pretended to sleep, but I heard his voice talking incessantly. I could no longer distinguish the words, but all the more clearly I now perceived the melody of fear. I had to think of the whimpering of animals being led to the slaughterhouse. And yet I couldn't quite despise this man. Perhaps every person, even the strongest, has their own bogeyman that makes them weak.

[65] By day we are all great heroes, but in our dreams the nightmare and the fear of ghosts overwhelm us. How could it gain power in our soul if it weren't already there from the beginning, merely chased away by the waking consciousness of the day? Memories from the battlefield crowded in on me: how many brave men I saw suddenly afflicted by something I didn't want to understand at the time. Youth knows nothing of death; for them it is something experienced only indirectly: a lyrical sensation. Beyond the midpoint of life, it gains reality. In that hour, my understanding of distant things grew.

All these un-Bedouin thoughts had distracted me from the voice of my companion, and suddenly I noticed that in its place a deep, even snoring could be heard. Even fear tires, if only it is thoroughly exhausted. I got up and looked into the sleeper's face, and suddenly the devil jumped on my back—but now a truly Bedouin devil. I could also say: the mimetic method overwhelmed me. Should I really go to the Jordan with this man again, when I already knew for sure how things would go for me there with him? And then climb back home on foot, laboriously uphill next to my loaded donkey? By God, then I would have to be the donkey myself! Farewell, brave sleeper, I'll give you the next escape at the Jordan! - With that, I loaded the pack animals and jumped onto my donkey. Let him walk on foot as I had for two days before - that was enough for me.

I have rarely ridden in such a cheerful mood. Sometimes the gods strike us with blindness - only so that we can afterwards rejoice all the more strongly in our eyesight. Only now did it become completely clear to me how impossible the idea was of appearing among the Beni Sakhr with such a man. I felt liberated and knew that everything would now succeed. Towards morning I arrived at the camp of Sheikh Ihsen of the Sawähre[1] tribe. His daughter Manwa met me on the way: she was carrying the large goatskin bag to fetch water.

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[1] Ihsen is the dialectal form of the name Hussein.

[66] I was gallant and offered her my donkey to carry the hose. So we went together, with the pack animals following behind. When we later returned to the camp together, her father looked at me sternly and with concern. But then a saying of my teacher Djaudat Efendi proved true: "You must laugh with the Arabs—then you will always win them over!" I laughed with him and won him over. I almost won even more, for he offered me his daughter in marriage for 100 gold pounds. The price could have been negotiated down further. But it seemed to me that the Emergency Association of German Science had not commissioned me to use their money to court the daughters of the Arabs. These and other reservations, of course, hardly fit into my role as a Bedouin.

I thanked the sheikh, spoke of temporary financial difficulties, postponed the decision until my next visit, and then told them about Abd er-Risäk, the solitary sleeper. They all laughed as hard as they could. I left the pack animals there and hired two others, along with a man to bring them back later. Then I left the camp—a little sleep-deprived, but happier than ever. In the evening I reached my home and workshop near Jerusalem again. I never visited the Sawähre tribe again, and they themselves seemed to avoid me ever since. I had probably imposed on them too much. The young Manwa, however, can be admired on Plate XVI of this book.

11. The man is found!

The two attempts with the Sawähre had been revealing from a psychological point of view; as was another attempt with two farmers who knew the East Jordan region from previous years: they had often worked there in the service of Bedouin landowners, doing cultivation and harvesting. The matter proceeded almost exactly as with the Sawähre: at the Jordan River they behaved like a horse that shies away from the stable. Their only contact with the Bedouins had been as "labor force": in the humble attitude of someone who is willing to be exploited.

[67] Now, to act as companions to a foreigner whose relationship with the Beni Sakhr was unknown and untested, became all the more impossible for them the closer the moment of the encounter with the Transjordanian Bedouin approached. The fear of the settled man for the nomad is primal and insurmountable: it is like the fear of the chicken when the hawk's wing sweeps above it. It was important for me to know that in this respect, the semi-Bedouin, at the stage of settled life shown by the Sawähra, are to be considered entirely equivalent to true settled people. The Bedouin blood curdles immediately when it loses its rhythm: the rhythm of nomadic life and movement. The Arab farmer is not comparable to the Germanic farmer. For us, the farmer is a complete human being, even more: the core of every truly Germanic national community. In the Arab world, the farmer is, at best, a nomad who has become embittered, if he is not simply a foreign body: a non-Arab component of the Arab world. The more peasant-like – in our sense – a farmer is, the less Arab he is. The role that the self-reliant farmer played in early Germanic times corresponds in Arab life to the role of the nomad.

But the attempts were now sufficient, and it was time for me to finally cross the Jordan. My patience was at an end: I decided to trust my luck and the "safe road of the police," although dealing with these state organs could prove more detrimental to my undertaking than a raid by the Beni Sakhr. I dressed as a noble Bedouin and hired a car at the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem to Amman.

It happened as I had feared earlier. The country of Transjordan considers itself a state and checks the luggage of travelers at its border. Mine was Bedouin on the outside, like myself, but the core consisted of films and all sorts of equipment. When these items came to light, I presented them as medical instruments intended as gifts. However, a Bedouin giving away such things was unprecedented, and an event without precedent is something impossible in the Orient.

[68] For two days, my problem was freeing myself from the astonished gaze and the "protection" of the Transjordanian police. And then I succeeded. For in Amman, the capital city where I was being guarded, resided the most powerful sheikh of the Beni Sachr sheikhs, Mithgål Pasha ben Sattâm elFais, the great murderer who, a year earlier, had unleashed his well-armed hordes upon Palestine and plundered the cities of Galilee, despite England's intervention. In addition to his three Bedouin wives, he had bought himself a townswoman from Amman and built a small house around her: his urban residence.

I understood immediately: I must have this man. And I suddenly understood something else—and this was the most important gain from my experiments with the two Sawahre—I understood the practical value of the title "Sheikh of the German Bedouins." Now I knew my way. Before sunrise—which is visiting time in Arabia—I asked the guardians of my freedom to escort me to Mithgål's house, which they readily agreed to after receiving a few small gifts. They then listened intently when I knocked on the gate of the feared chieftain and introduced myself as "Muhammad Ferid, Sheikh of the German Bedouin." A black slave opened the door and asked me to wait a moment. I saw a few women disappear behind a curtain, then the slave drew back a second curtain, and there before me sat Mithgål Pasha ben Sattâm, sword-girded, blinking at me like a wolf on the scent of prey. I spoke: “O Sheikh of Sheikhs! Blessed be the hour when I gaze upon the face of the Lion of the Desert. Truly, the glory of your deeds has reached the land of the Germans over the mountains—through me, the German Bedouins send you their greetings. Give us a man to lead us to behold the glory of his victorious tribes!”—Meanwhile, Mithgål approached my shoulder, grasped my right hand with both of his, eyed me sideways, and flicked his nostrils as if he were literally trying to smell me. And when I had finished, he said: “Truly, the man has been found. It is I myself.” Then we embraced each other.

[69] As I happened to turn around, I saw below, down a few steps, the bewildered faces of the Arab guards who had brought me here. I nodded amiably to them and dismissed them with a gesture like one dismisses one's servants. And they actually left. At that moment, my life as a Bedouin began.

That same day, we set out into the steppe, and early enough, we reached Sheikh Mithgal's western camp.

12. Mithgal Pasha introduces me

When I then looked at the tent camp to which my guide and host had brought me, it turned out that it was not far from the ruined steppe castle of el-Mshatta—precisely the area I had intended to avoid. For it lay near the border between the steppe and those parts of the Bauland where the Beni Sachr owned wheat fields, which they had cultivated by foreign farmers. Some of these farmers must have been from the area around el-Khalil, and I didn't want to celebrate a reunion with these former friends and guests of mine here. That would have exposed me in the eyes of the Bedouin.

But now I was there and had to see how I could extricate myself from the situation. Things had turned out quite differently than I had planned in almost every detail, but I had become too much of an Oriental in my habits to dwell on it. How often had I heard and repeated: Allahu Akbar! Allah kerlm! Kull Si min Allah! or min en-nasib! And thus relinquished responsibility for all that happened and became to that higher power to which the Muslim unconditionally submits. And what I had spoken aloud from the hearts of others on hundreds of occasions, I now said to myself. My role as "Sheikh Arab el-Alman" was not my own invention, but rather a whimsical twist of fate, and I submitted to it. Should the farmers of el=Chall get in my way or be surprised by it - by God, they should be surprised!

[70]

They should have realized that I really was the sheikh of the German Bedouin!

This strange role had become my salvation from a great embarrassment. For how could I have continued to play the part of a member of a tribe known there, when at that time I only spoke the dialect of Sahrawi among the Arabic dialects and would therefore have had to come as a

Sahrawi—a role in which no one among the full Bedouin would have respected me. But as it was, I was from somewhere, from very far away—even further north than the Ahl al-Shamal, the northernmost Bedouin tribes. There are tribes of Kurdish origin there who speak Arabic. They are called Arab al-Akrad, as if Akrad didn't mean "Kurds," but were the proper name of an Arab nomadic tribe. There are also tribes of Turkmen origin there; they are called Arab al-Turkmen. Why shouldn't there also be German nomadic tribes there—far beyond the mountains: Arab el=Almån? And since the Germans are real men—as everyone remembers from the war—and the best rifles in the world come from them, why shouldn't the German nomadic tribes be considered equal to full-fledged Bedouins? For everywhere in the world, human society is divided into full-fledged Bedouins, semi-nomads, and settled peoples, and everywhere the Bedouins are the pinnacle of humanity. So I came from afar, yet I was one of them. How much respect I could claim for myself and my tribe depended on how I behaved.

The tent camp where I initially stayed was, so to speak, my host's smallholding. From here, his enormous flocks of sheep were grazed. The tents were pitched under the protection of the old fortress of Imm elAmad, which was situated somewhat higher up, so that a raid could be repelled in time. The walk from the camp to the castle took about a quarter of an hour. The camp itself also housed a garrison of several horsemen, who were indeed armed with well-maintained German Model 98 infantry rifles. The castle was equipped with several machine guns, also of German origin.

[71] All this weaponry came from the arsenals of Damascus, which had been abandoned by the Turks in 1918 and then immediately plundered by the Bedouins.

The machine guns were the pride of my host, as was the castle of Imm el-Amad itself. He offered it to me as quarters. But I declined, explaining that a Bedouin belongs in a tent. My most compelling reasons, however, lay somewhat deeper: since that experience in the flea-infested cave, I had developed a strong aversion to permanent dwellings. Fleas, on the other hand, don't thrive in tents.

I soon realized that I had made the right decision. In the tent camp, there was Bedouin tribal life, but in the castle, a kind of military atmosphere prevailed. The castellan was my host's brother, Awad ibn Sattâm el-Fais, a strange man who always walked around among the people with a gloomy expression, perhaps because he felt insecure about something. I was told that he had shot a Transjordanian farmer a few days earlier. This is how it happened: one of Awad's camels was standing in the farmer's field and grazing. The field belonged to the farmer and was not a pasture, so he drove the animal off his land. According to settled people's customs, this was his right. In Awad's view, however, a farmer has no right to justice against a Bedouin. Or rather: he simply got angry. So he took his German rifle, Model 98, aimed, and since the farmer presented a convenient target, he shot him dead. Legal disputes between farmers and the Beni Sakhr are still hardly feasible today, even though the Emir of Transjordan claims something like the office of chief justice. A farmer is only considered legally competent by the Beni Sakhr if he is under their protection. This applies, for example... B. towards those peasant farmers who cultivate their wheat fields for them. Otherwise, however, in the eyes of the nomad, the farmer is fair game.

Incidentally, peasant farmers were quartered precisely in the castles of Imm el-Amad and el-Gastal – all the more reason for me to avoid these buildings if possible. Whether my friends from Djebel el-Khalil were also there, I never investigated. Only remnants of walls remain of the steppe castle el-Mshatta; it is no longer habitable.

[72]

It is also about a two-hour ride from the edge of the building area.

I found the tent camp below Imm el-Amad set up in two rows. The first thing I did was pitch my own tent in one of these rows, next to the sheikh's tent. The sheikh of the camp was Mithgål ibn Sattâm, my host himself. But since he was mostly away, his slave Muhammad represented him. Muhammad had supervisory authority, while the economic affairs were in the hands of Sat'a, one of Mithgål's wives. However, the women's quarters remained hidden from me that day.

While my tent was being erected, I should have been in the men's quarters of the sheikh's tent for my reception and taken the place of honor. Since I didn't do so, but instead oversaw the tent construction and the unloading and stowing of my luggage, this was certainly a mistake in the eyes of the Bedouin. I felt it, but I couldn't change it. What I really lacked was the retinue that accompanies a traveling chieftain—or, to put it more modestly, at least one man who could represent me where I wasn't. The best thing would have been to buy a slave. While the slave trade is officially forbidden in Transjordania, which is British Mandate territory, importing slaves from the Hejaz is no laughing matter. But a good slave is expensive. So my tent was procured by the male servants of the camp, and this situation wasn't without its risks. While theft within the Bedouin camp is hardly to be expected,

especially since the property of a guest is inviolable, according to ancient custom, anyone who steals from a fellow camper loses their thieving hand. Of course, in practice, this isn't always as strict as it seems. The enforcement of sentences is particularly difficult in any Bedouin legal system because every full-fledged Bedouin is essentially his own master and subject to no one's authority. Even the most powerful sheikh only “rules” by virtue of his wealth and personal superiority over his fellow tribesmen; he does not have any command authority.

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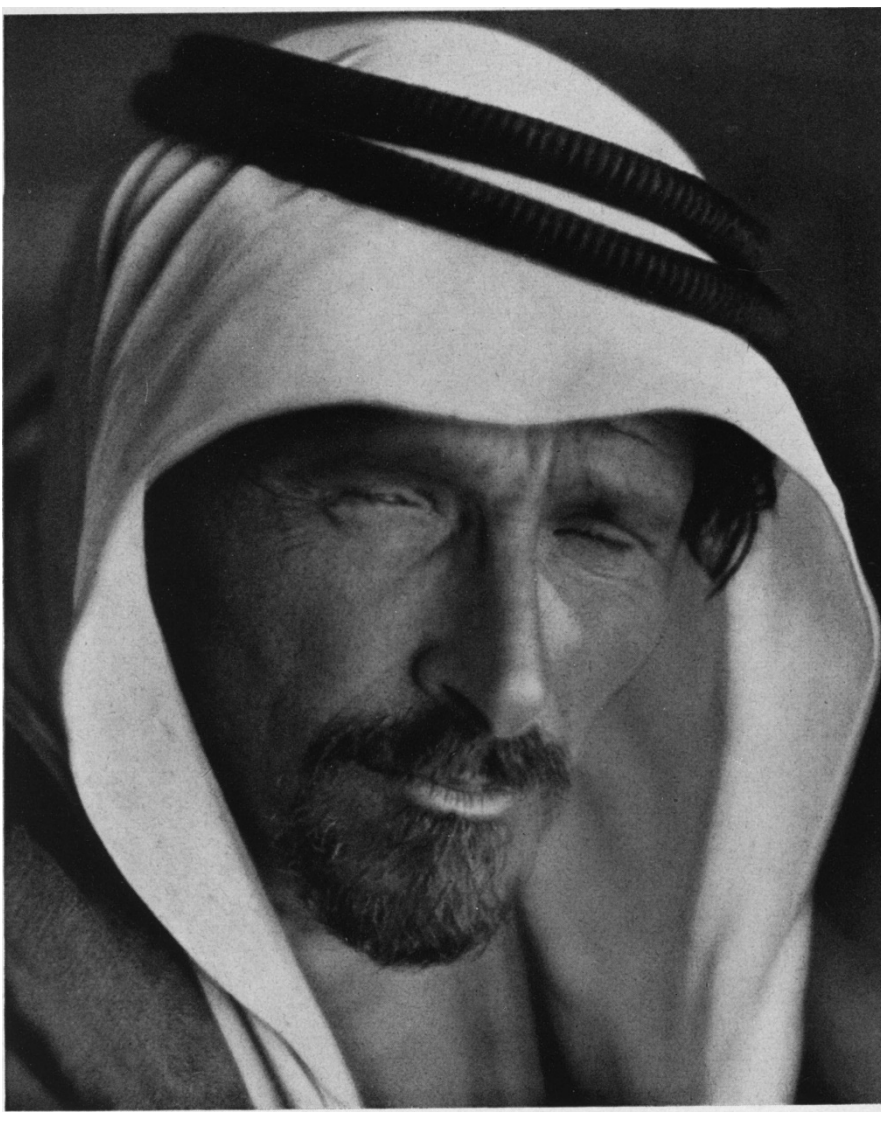
[1] Pgl. 6.50.

[72]/1

XVII. Young sheikh from the tribe of Beni Sachr

[72]/2

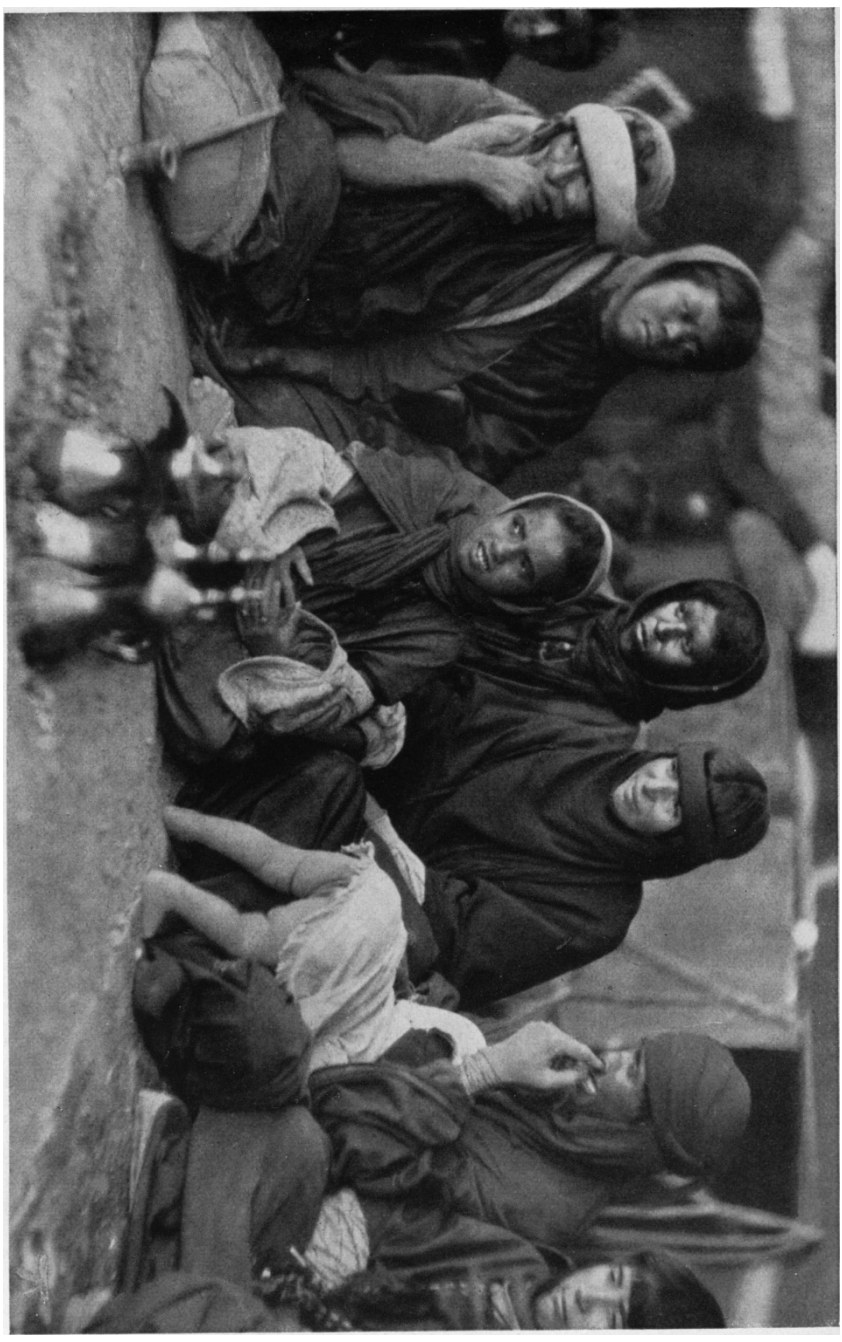


XVIII. Mithgal Pasha furious —

[72]/3

XIX. —and Sat'a, the outcast

[72]/4



XX. Women gossiping in the tent. From the right: Tarfa, Hissa, Sat'a, two female slaves, a slave child, and an old Bedouin woman.
In front of them, the three coffee pots on hot camel dung.

[73] Anyone who does not submit to the time-honored, ancient rules of Bedouin communal life and violates one of its fundamental principles of honor is expelled from the community. The community itself, the tribe, therefore, holds the ultimate authority to enforce this only truly enforceable punishment. It forms an indestructible foundation for Bedouin communal life, without which it could disintegrate into the arbitrary actions of individuals—if indeed there were such a thing as "individuals." But the Bedouin is quite primitive in this respect, in that he is incapable—like the "modern" Westerner who has undergone enlightenment—of living as a consciously distinct individual; he is "collective" in all his experience, that is, bound to the community. Therefore, exclusion from the community is truly an annihilation of his very basis of existence: when he ceases to be a member of the community, he is nothing at all and feels worse than dead. Only one path remains for him: to become a member of a new community. But no

other tribe will accept the outlaw if they recognize him as such. The outlaw must therefore continue to live in the foreign land under a mask, in constant fear of being exposed. Or he must disappear into the peasantry and blend in with the local people. Or he must form a league of outcasts, of the free, with other outlaws—a community of the unsociable, as it were. Such gangs exist, and they are the curse of the steppes: veritable criminal gangs.

Our Plate XXVIII offers a glimpse into the face of an outlaw.

Theft from a fellow camper is usually punished with a few camels, and the caught thief will willingly pay them to make the matter quickly forgotten and prevent worse things from happening. For such theft—only such theft, of course—is dishonorable. But I feared less the greed than the curiosity of my new friends. There were, of course, non-Bedouin items in my luggage that could suffer damage if viewed in daylight, such as films. I felt that this would eventually be my downfall; however, it was important to postpone that moment for as long as possible.

[74] Meanwhile, two rams had been slaughtered and boiled. Not long after I had finally joined the circle of men, some squatting, some lying around the coffee fire, two of them rose, moved away, and took the enormous, circular copper bowl that had been wheeled over from the women's quarters. Touching the hot copper itself is impossible, all the more so since the bowl has no handles. Perhaps we should call it a platter rather than a bowl: the bottom is a large, flat disc enclosed by a low, vertical rim. The two men pushed it onto a carpet and dragged it in, grasping its four corners. In this respect, then, everything resembled the feasting of the Sawahre. Mithgål invited me to join him at the table and knelt on his right knee, slipped back the long sleeve of his robe, threw the right corner of his headscarf over his shoulder, and then fastened it with the black woolen headbands. Everything proceeded smoothly and with practiced ease, unlike with the Sawåhre, who, while still familiar with Bedouin table manners, no longer practiced them, and who only attempted to recreate them in my honor with varying degrees of success. The other feast-goers had faded into the background while Mithgål and I, from opposite sides, dug deeper and deeper into the mound of rice with our right hands. Perched atop its summit were the two sheep heads, offering their delicious tongues. When I finally stopped and licked the grease from my dripping fingers, Mithgål glanced sideways at me and said, "Eat!" But I assumed he was full, so I thanked him (not him, but God: el-hamdu lillah!) and rose. We rubbed our hands on the roof of the tent, which, from the same custom of countless predecessors, bore a distinct layer of grease. I said to this, "Sabün el-Arab!" (Bedouin soap!) - a joke Mithgål habitually laughed at, as it almost always comes up on these occasions among Bedouins who know the city.

While the group of preferred eaters was engrossed in the mountain of rice and its meat content, I had a conversation with Mithgål, which I took very seriously and for whose success I needed the mood of his comfortable satiety.

[75] I mentioned that the Beni Sakhr were known as far as Almanfa as powerful raiding heroes—especially the Ibn Sattam clan, which was more famous for its warlike exploits than any other. This was indeed true, for the Arab Revolt of 1929, insofar as it consisted of military action, was in fact the work of the Beni Sakhr under the leadership of Mithgål. At that time, all of Palestine, including the weak British occupation, trembled before him. My host was pleased to hear this. I then made it quite clear that I expected a grand raid from him in honor of my visit, and he received this idea with obvious flattery.

Such raids[1] are an integral part of the Bedouin community's way of life and are carried out according to ancient chivalric rules. They represent the highlights of Bedouin existence, like islands in the endless sea of timeless idleness. Through this, the Bedouin demonstrates a tremendous capacity for exertion in his soul, which enables him to exert incredible effort now and then when he sees an imminent goal and tangible gain before him. When a band—it can consist of a few, but also of a thousand camel riders—sets out on a raid, they often choose a target that is geographically far away, sometimes hundreds of kilometers. Somewhere, the scouts (the "eyes") have spotted a poorly guarded camp of a hostile or at least unfriendly tribe, and now, with the utmost secrecy, they mount their camels and, following a long and circuitous route, always concealing their direction, strive for the target in forced marches. Usually, the camel rider has a second man with him as a passenger, while any horses brought along remain unburdened: they are spared for the final moment of the raid. Water is carried along, as well as the most essential provisions: some ground grain or dates. They ride for twenty hours, sometimes more, and sleep for two. This sometimes goes on for weeks. Everything depends on overwhelming the camp with sheer force.

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[1] razu or razlja, plural razawât (the 1 is pronounced approximately like the German palatal r, z like a soft s). From this comes the word Razzia.

[76]

Fighting and bloodshed should be avoided as much as possible to prevent blood feuds. The plunder consists of all the possessions of the robbed: primarily the herds, but also the camp itself and everything in it. This includes the men's clothes and the women's jewelry. Only the women and girls themselves are untouchable, where the chivalric rules of honorable raiding are still fully in force. Indeed, if a wife of the robbed catches up with the departing raiders and keeps pace with them to request a camel from the spoils, one is given back to her as a matter of courtesy, and she brings it to her robbed husband.

The raid, I told myself, represents one of the festive high points of Bedouin life, which I hoped to reach as soon as possible. From there, I expected the deepest insight into and participation in the inner lives of these people. Mithgål promised me everything and immediately devised a plan to raid the Howiet, with whom the Beni Sachr had been locked in a blood feud for years. But let me explain how it all came about. Only after weeks did I learn that large-scale raids in Transjordan and the adjacent southern and eastern regions were currently impossible: England, through the Emir of Transjordan, forbade them to avoid trouble with the Wahhabi state of King Obn Sa'üd, who also suppressed raiding. The Transjordanian prohibition was enforced by an English air squadron.

This time, I had arrived too late. Only a few small raids were possible, during which the property of some mounted steppe wanderers fell victim. I myself did not enrich myself with this property, which was perhaps un-Duinish. I would rather remain silent about these matters.

The very morning after my first night in the camp, Mithgål took me to meet his wives – an extraordinary favor. Perhaps he wanted to offer me compensation for the promised raid, or perhaps it was because he wanted to curry favor with me for the wishes he would later express: he needed gifts, especially for his youngest favorite wife.

[77] Mithgal said, "My tent is yours." He didn't mean it literally, though; at least, he probably only wanted me to peek into the women's quarters now and then, under supervision. His face lengthened and then contracted again, and his eyes grew smaller and smaller as I settled comfortably in. At first, of course, everything went well. I told myself: Mithgal is a tyrant, and tyrants are capricious. Perhaps this opportunity to study the harem of a famous tribal chief up close won't come around again so easily. So I slung my camera around my neck and hid it under my cloak. That wasn't Bedouin, but that was precisely my intention: to deal with all the non-Bedouin thoughts and actions that my academic profession compelled me to as early as possible. For the deeper I immersed myself in my role, the more difficult everything that contradicted it would become. But my most important images of these women's lives only came later.

When I entered the women's quarters with Mithgål, it was like visiting thoroughbred horses in a stable: the women took no notice of us whatsoever, but remained absorbed in whatever each of them was doing. Mithgål explained to me in a whisper what each of them was doing. He often accompanied his explanations with a meaningful wink, sometimes he poked me with his finger. I didn't understand everything he whispered clearly, but I realized that deep down he was a big kid, and I began to love him.

He had two wives. The older one, Sat'a, was the real mistress of the tent: the entire operation was under her control. She had a little son, Ali, about four years old. The younger one, Tarfa, had no child yet. She stood to the side, as if she were uninvolved in everything. But it was clear that her master liked her. There were also some black slave women, a few children, and an old woman from a neighboring tent.

I saw that the old woman and some of the children had runny eyes, and I offered them medicine. They were very happy to hear that.

[78] I immediately proceeded to investigate, penetrating deeper into the tent. Now Sat'a and her slave gave me the rug on which they had been sitting. I sat down. Mithgål followed me hesitantly. Now Tarfa also approached, leaned against one of the large storage sacks that stood nearby, and looked at me. Her face was completely uncovered, even without the broad black headband that is part of the traditional dress[1]. Her chin and cheeks were tattooed with blue patterns, as with all Bedouin women, and her eyes were blackened with antimony. Nevertheless, young Tarfa didn't really look very Bedouin. She would have been more at home in Eastern Europe. Sat'a was much more authentic.

I said to Mithgål: "I like the clothing of your women. How much more elegant it is than that of city women!" I received grateful glances from two pairs of female eyes and understood that these tent women suffered many hardships because of the city wife in Ammån, with whom Mithgål spent most of his time. Then my host asked me, "How do the German Bedouin women dress?" He held his head bowed, slightly jutting forward, and his eyes—disfigured by a poorly healed trachoma—were barely visible. The mischievous cheekiness of earlier had vanished; an inner storm was brewing. I saw it, but I didn't yet pay attention to it. I

still had to make an impression. Once, a Sahüri had asked me, "Is it true that all your women wear silk?" Silk is something glittering, rustling, flattering, captivating that beguiles people's senses. That occurred to me, and I said: “The wives of the great ones always wear silk there.” – At that, Sat'a's and Tarfa's eyes lit up at once, and they lost all shyness and caution, staring at me with unbridled desire. Excitedly, I grabbed my hidden camera to capture those glances.

That was too much for Mithgål. His wives' desire was indeed for the silk and not for me, but he understood it differently. He jumped up and trembled with rage. The heads of the two women disappeared instantly, but I turned around and now saw the tyrant in full display, and this sight aroused my hunting instinct even more.

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[1] Cafel XXIX.

[79]

I jumped up and said: “Truly, you are the Lion of the Desert, the Destroyer of Cities, the Terror of Your Enemies, the Whip of God—you truly are, as a thousand songs sing of you. Up, Mithgal, let us ride! Your enemies are my enemies. I am full of patience to fight at your side!”—Meanwhile, one shot was taken, and it seemed to me that it was a good one. We can see it in Plate XVIII. His countenance then loosened and smoothed again, his eyes appearing. I was very satisfied, and this was contagious. Then we went out of the tent together.

The next day, Mithgal returned to Amman and left me alone in the camp. He announced that he would come again in a week and then take me eastward “to the camels,” that is, into the actual nomadic camp of his son Sultån, who led his father's camel herds from pasture to pasture out on the steppe. Imm el-Amad only had small livestock: mainly sheep, a few donkeys for carrying water skins, and only a very few camels.

The week passed, perhaps another. The sheikh didn't come. The black slave Muhammad kept a close eye on me. The whole camp was characterized by a system of slavery and women. There were only a few full-blooded men, who performed a kind of guard and reconnaissance duty to protect against accidents. Every evening I was called into one of the tents, where the men's solemn nightly chatter took place—just like in the cities, except that they sat in tents instead of houses, stared at weapons, drank bitter coffee instead of sweet, and chatted about other things. None of these men seemed important to me; they were probably the select few who had escaped the true nomadic life "among the camels." Some offered valuable insights into the lives of the slaves and their relationships with their masters and the masters' wives and children. But I couldn't truly participate in that life without ruining my reputation and jeopardizing my future actions.

[80] The women's quarters of Mithgål, and the activities that took place there in secret day after day, also held significant potential. However, extreme caution and restraint were required there. As a man, I was forbidden from living there. And in this respect, the prospects were no better outside "among the camels." Making observations about the external organization of women's lives was at least possible: about marriage law, tent-based living, and so on. But others had already done that. All psychological research based on genuine and sustained participation seemed to be barred from this.

There was only one avenue: to have my own harem and, as it were, to implant it into the women's quarters of Bedouin tent masters. The more I considered this idea, the more compelling and self-evident it seemed to me. And finally, my decision was made. There was a woman of European origin in Jerusalem who spoke Arabic and possessed all the necessary qualifications to participate in my work in the intended manner. If she was willing to “become a Bedouin” and, through her presence, suggest my harem, then my work in this regard could flourish.

So I packed up some of my belongings, which I was reluctant to leave to the curiosity of my hosts. I left most of it in my tent, commended it to the public's protection until my return, and rode to Amman, from where I would travel to Jerusalem.

13. Sat'a's Expulsion

In Amman, I arrived at Mithgal Pasha's town house. (He still holds the title of Pasha from the time of the Turks. Incidentally, the Arabs, whose language doesn't have a "p," speak Basha.) I actually did find him there. He was currently experiencing tax difficulties. This was one of the downsides of this non-Bedouin town house. The roving possessions of free nomads are usually not easily seized by the state, but here the prince's proximity and friendship had an effect.

[81] Mithgål owns thousands of camels, among other things, but almost always lacks cash. Mithgål would have preferred to borrow money from me, and he did eventually ask, albeit in few words. But I remained deaf to his request, for I had other plans. Mithgål deserved a decent gift from me; it was his due. As for what one usually gives a tribal chief – weapons, binoculars, and the like – I only had what was absolutely essential for myself. It also had to be something that would bring life to

the camp. I had silk in mind, garments for the two women in the tent. But first, I had to consider whether this might stir up unpleasant memories. My first hint was immediately understood: he wanted silk, yes, silk – by God! Lots of silk: for a garment for Tarfa, one for Sat'a, and also a city dress with a coat for his city wife. Furthermore, a large black headscarf with a woven colorful border for Imm Sultån. Imm Sultån means Mother of Sultån, and Sultån was the name of his eldest son, who represented him out "with the camels." Imm Sultån was in her son's harem, after whom she was always named.[1] This harem also included the son's two wives. What if they wanted silk too!

My future assistant, if she accepted my offer, would now also have to dress in silk, since the wives of German Bedouin sheikhs are known to wear silk. My conscience stirred, unfortunately a little too late. The next day I was in Jerusalem. Everything went well: I bought suitable fabrics at reasonable prices, provided for my host's entire harem, and equipped my own. I also supplemented my tent household according to my new experiences. The luggage had now grown considerably. Not a week went by before I was back in Ammån, this time accompanied by someone.

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1 In Arabic, parents are named after their first son. I have forgotten Sultan's real name, for no one ever called her by any other name. When I addressed my host, I said "Abu Sultan" (Sultan's father), and that is what his peers also called him. Sat'a referred to him as Abu Ali, because Ali was the name of her own little son. But when he was angry, the women called him "el-Basha" (the Pasha).

[82] I had the car driven directly to the gate of the Pasha's house; there I got out, while Sitt Marjam, my companion, remained in the car. But Mithgål was not there; he was staying in his "fortress" of Imm el-Amad. My companion, Sitt Marjam, however, was taken by slave women to the women's quarters to greet Mithgål's city wife. Since the latter, according to city custom, was "forbidden" and veiled, i.e., not visible to men, I had to wait in the car until Sitt Marjam returned. She did so soon, for she, too, had nothing essential to learn regarding Arab city women. Then we drove towards Mådeba until we reached Imm el-Amad.

There, our arrival attracted attention. All of Mithgål's heavily armed warriors streamed out of the gate of the "fortress," but they kept a respectful distance, from where they stared at the silk-clad Bedouin woman. Finally, Mithgål appeared and approached the car. I solemnly alighted and embraced the Pasha. Then I showed him my harem. He looked at Sitt Marjam for a long time, especially at her silk dress, which was cut in the style of Bedouin women's clothing, and seemed very pleased. Then I gave him the gifts. He did not take them yet: he would come to the camp. But when I was already sitting in the car again, to drive as close as possible to the tent camp, he came back once more, took me by the hand, and led me aside. In a whisper, he requested the gift for his city wife. He was probably worried about letting it reach the area of the tents first. I gave it to him immediately. He took it without thanks, and I left without saying goodbye. That's how it's done.

After arriving at the tent camp, Sitt Marjam was immediately taken to Mithgål's women's quarters, while I myself first inspected my own tent. I found it disheveled and dirty, but nothing was missing. I had my companion's luggage taken over to "Sitt Marjam's" tent in Mithgal, where it was received in the women's quarters. With that, Sitt Marjam had finally established herself there, and my access was secured. They might have been surprised for a moment that I didn't take "my wife" into the tent with me.

[83] However, the German Bedouins have their own peculiar customs, and custom is custom. With such thoughts, I approached the women's quarters.

I found Sitt Marjam there in a state of great distress. Her silk garment was being turned inside out, and every piece of clothing was being inspected and examined. Then they moved on to her hair and eyes. Tarfa was a master at darkening eyes; it was the only thing she was acknowledged to be truly good at. She found Sitt Marjam's eyelids in an unprofessional state and hastened to remedy this, while her victim desperately resisted, justifiably fearing infection with the eye diseases prevalent there. Sitt Marjam was still quite new to her Bedouin life. My arrival immediately put an end to this activity.

Then I went around the partition to the men's side for the ceremonial greeting of the campmates gathered there. Soon Mithgål also arrived from Imm el-Amad for the evening meal. Afterwards, he again led me aside by the hand and whispered all sorts of things: he was returning to Amman immediately, but would come back in a week to lead me eastward "to the camels" to his son's camp. He ignored my question about whether the promised raid would then take place; but he asked me not to give the silk to his tent women prematurely: there would be plenty of time for that on the day of departure. I promised, and he left.

Afterwards, I performed my evening prayer in front of my tent and went to sleep. I hadn't been lying there long when there was a rustling sound and Sat'a stood at the entrance. I didn't move. She squatted down and

whispered: "Oh Muhammad Ferl!" I said: "What is it?" She moved a little closer: "Do you have silk for me?" “By God, I have silk, and you will receive it on the day of my departure.” – “Is that true?” – “By the life of the Prophet!” – Then she said not another word and disappeared in an instant.

Whether only a week passed before the Pasha returned, or two weeks or more – who could say? But as time went on, the inner lives of the people who surrounded me [84] became clearer and clearer to me, especially since Sat'a's story stood out more and more distinctly from the conversations. And this was necessary, because otherwise I would hardly have fully understood the events that took place here in the camp shortly before my departure "to the camels."

Sata's father had been a powerful sheikh among the sheikhs of the Beni Sachr, who refused to acknowledge the prevailing authority of Sattam and his son Mithgal. Mithgal then sought to win him over through a clan alliance: he wooed Sat'a. The father resisted for a long time, then yielded to the advice of his kin and gave up his daughter, but not at a low price. They knew Mithgal and his changing moods and protected themselves against them by strengthening their own power.

Soon after Sat'a's marriage, her father fell in an honorable raid. But his brothers and sons were also feared warriors. They find their sister being treated dishonorably by Mithgål: again and again she returns to her clan's tents, as Mithgål drives her away in a fit of rage. The clans threaten battle by driving off and keeping the enemy's camels. Each time, the end is that Mithgål takes his wife back.

As a little girl, Sat'a shared the fate of all young Bedouin girls: she was exploited through excessive work. Early on, however, she is out "with the camels" of her tribe, where—difficult to tame like them—she proves herself best. She never becomes domesticated like the women "with the sheep" to whom she later goes. As Mithgål's wife, she is once again assigned to the sheep and used only in the tent. Outwardly, she becomes effeminate, but her blood only burns hotter from sitting around and being exploited.

Her relationship with Mithgal was initially woven from fear and hatred. Neither fear nor hatred actually originated from her, but rather stemmed from a shared fear and hatred: it was the sentiment of her clan against the clan of Ibn Sattam. But as Mithgål approaches her relatives and flatters her, who is actually not to his liking, he charms them one after another with his fortunate blend of boyish frankness and cunning amiability.

[85] The first to give in is the mother; behind her rugged strength, she hides a somewhat too soft heart and is easily moved to tears. Sat'a resists his lighthearted advances, only to achieve that he now truly desires her, more passionately each day. Her mother begins to rave about his daring deeds as a raiding hero. Finally, the spark ignites in her blood, and her hatred suddenly transforms into its opposite.

After the marriage, a period of intense infatuation follows for both of them; it lasts until Sat'a's pregnancy. Then Mithgål suddenly turns away when Sat'a's audacity is at its greatest. She does not submit; terrible outbursts ensue, and twice she is cast out. One day, Tarfa arrives in the tent as the favored wife.

She is younger than Sat'a and chosen according to the tent master's taste. She brought nothing into the tent: no high saddles on which to rest one's arm while sleeping, no skins for water and grease, no carpets, no chests. She can do nothing and understands nothing about managing, but she possesses her husband's senses. And yet she is no match for Sat'a's consuming hatred.

Sat'a doesn't speak a word to her, pretends she isn't there. And yet she encounters the hated woman with every step in the tent. Tarfa, the cat, is always lurking in the background, feigning modesty, participating in nothing, neither work nor pleasure. As soon as she thinks she is alone, she rummages through open sacks for food. If someone comes, she stands innocently in the corner where she was just rummaging. She plays the neglected and perpetually offended one, and indeed, with the tent master's frequent absences, her position in the camp would be difficult to maintain were it not for the support she finds in Tamåm, Mithgål's elderly sister, who feels pushed out of the tent by Sat'a and hopes to assert herself more easily alongside the incompetent Tarfa.

Tamåm has a hard face and red-dyed hair. She lives in her brother's camp, having been driven out by her husband. She plays the role of a saintly woman, prays often, and has pious speeches ready; this earns her a certain degree of respect, even though she is otherwise merely tolerated.

[86] Her brother doesn't want her in his own tent, but otherwise he lets her do as she pleases. Her talents lie in scheming, stealth, and hypocrisy, and it is through these that she makes herself indispensable. But nobody likes her.

Sat'a is popular throughout almost the entire camp, among women, men, and children, because she is generous with her possessions. What

belongs to her personally, she shares with her personal slave, Hissa, and also with the second slave, Shatwa. The three are faithfully bound together; even the husbands of the two slave women, themselves black slaves, are, as it were, included in this bond of loyalty, unless they are currently quarreling with their wives. Sat'a knows no arrogance and demands only one privilege, which no one disputes with her except Tarfa: she wants gifts of a certain kind, such as perfumes or beautiful fabrics, all to herself. This is the sore point in her life, that the hated Tarfa, who is otherwise incompetent, is superior to her in this one respect: making herself attractive to men. The slave women and a fellah woman working in the camp consider it perfectly natural that Sat'a simply takes the coveted gifts they receive from Sitt Marjam or me and keeps them in her lockable box: especially small mirrors and antimony for darkening the edges of their eyes. She rubs herself with pieces of gifted soap for the fragrance, but almost never washes herself. She sees Sitt Marjam using a toothbrush. Although she receives gifts every day, she is deeply offended when she doesn't get a toothbrush – not even once to try it out.

Sat'a is the mother of a little son, Ali, who is destined to become a great sheikh. This also secures her respect in the camp. Ali himself is a little rascal like the other boys. He dances circles around his mother, and she tolerates it and laughs, like all Arab mothers – she even laughs when he throws stones at her.

Then came the strange story with the silk. After she had received confirmation from me that silk was available for her, Sat'a couldn't contain herself and blabbed it to everyone. She was under the impression that she alone would receive silk, even though I had never said that and that was never my opinion.

[87] While I liked Sat'a better than Tarfa, that sly cat, it was precisely for that reason—namely, for Sat'a's sake—that it was necessary to maintain the strictest neutrality. Blabbing was the stupidest thing she could have done. She knew that herself, but there was no other way: she had to have her triumph. Again and again, she had Sitt Marjam show her the silk garment—Sitt Marjam didn't wear it in the camp, but went about there like all the Bedouin women—and again and again she boasted about her future splendor. She achieved her purpose instantly: Tarfa and her protector Tamâm could hardly bear the envy. But Tamâm remains colder and more calculating in her passion: with sharp words, she further incites Sat'a's arrogance, sets her against Tarfa, and provokes her to the extreme in order to bring about her downfall. The next morning, Sat'a and Tarfa fight. Sat'a pushes Tarfa off the rug and tries to drive her out of the tent. Tamâm squats to the side and grins to herself with satisfaction. Finally, the chief slave, the black Muhammad, Hissa's husband, intervenes: he beats both women with a stick until they quiet down. Tarfa now follows Tamâm's advice and withdraws to her tent. The old hypocrite knows why she advises this: it will be Sat'a's undoing.

A few more days pass, monotonous camp life, then a message spreads through the camp: The Pasha is coming! Now things become lively. In Mithgâl's tent, the large water skins are carefully dragged to their proper place, the tent ropes are checked and adjusted (which otherwise happens early in the morning before sunrise), the support beams are straightened and aligned. In anxious eagerness, Sat'a is at the forefront of everything. Then the women darken their eyelashes and eyelids. Even Ali, the "little Pasha," who is usually seen covered in dirt and with a runny nose among the slave children, now has water splashed on his face and has to have his eyelids darkened with kohl.

When the word spreads that the Pasha is approaching, Sat'a begins to tremble, and Hissa, the slave girl, trembles too. At the last moment, Hissa disappears into the background, and only Sitt Marsam remains with Sat'a in the tent.

[88] The Pasha arrives on horseback with an attendant. He dismounts calmly and approaches my tent, somewhat stealthily. I rise to greet him. We solemnly sit down on my carpet and exchange polite questions and respectful answers. We hadn't been so formal in a long time; today we were exaggerating the "niceties" (mudjamalat) far beyond Bedouin customs, adopting the speech patterns of city dwellers. There was no doubt, something was in the air.

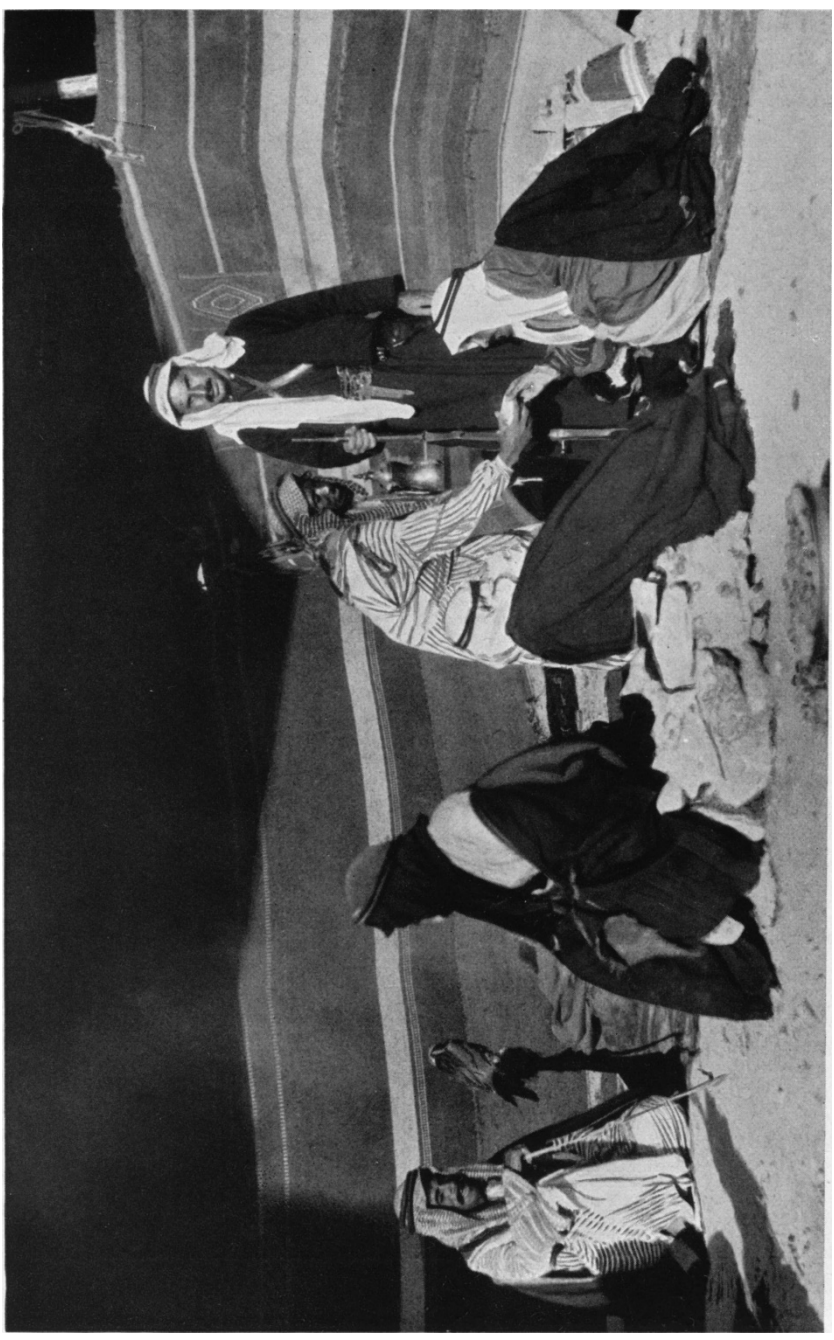
Mithqal rises and goes into the women's section of his tent. I can observe all of this clearly from my rug. He turns to Sitt Marjam and greets her briefly. He offers no greeting to Sat'a, merely glancing at her with an angry flash from the corner of his eye. Black Muhammad must have already reported to him, as he is currently quarreling with Hissa. Sat'a trembles and flees from the rug, then squats down on the ground at a considerable distance. The Pasha sits down next to Sitt Marjam and chats with her for a while. Then he leaves his tent and goes to Tamam.

What happened there was hidden from my eyes and Sitt Marjam's. But it is certain that he found Tarfa there, beautifully made up, even with red lipstick, which Sitt Marjam had given her. It is also certain that Tamam had been stirring up trouble against Sat'a.

It has become quiet in the Pasha's tent. Sat'a has slipped into bed, perhaps still harboring some hope. Sitt Marjam also lies down and

pretends to be asleep. For a quarter of an hour, only the dogs of the camp can be heard barking; they bark at their master, who has been a stranger in his own camp ever since he bought the veiled woman in Amman. Then suddenly the Pasha's voice shrills from his tent: "Get up, you daughter of filth!" and Sat'a is seen leaping into the empty men's section, and Mithqal is seen grabbing her by the hair and dragging her through the dust, while furiously beating her with his camel stick. She clings to his feet and screams, "Ya abd!", incessantly: "Ya abd! Ya abd!". This means: O slave! O slave! and is directed at the second slave, the husband of Shatwa, who is more favorably disposed towards her than Hissa's husband, Muhammad.

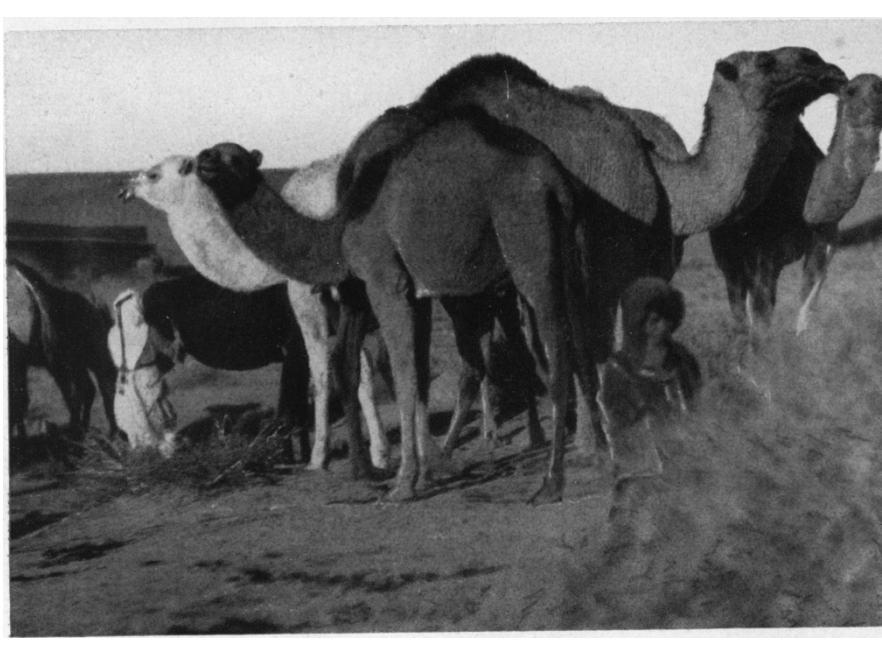
[88]/1



XXI. In the men's quarters at sunrise. The slave Adwan hands the Pasha a cup of coffee. Behind him, a soldier of Prince Abdallah.

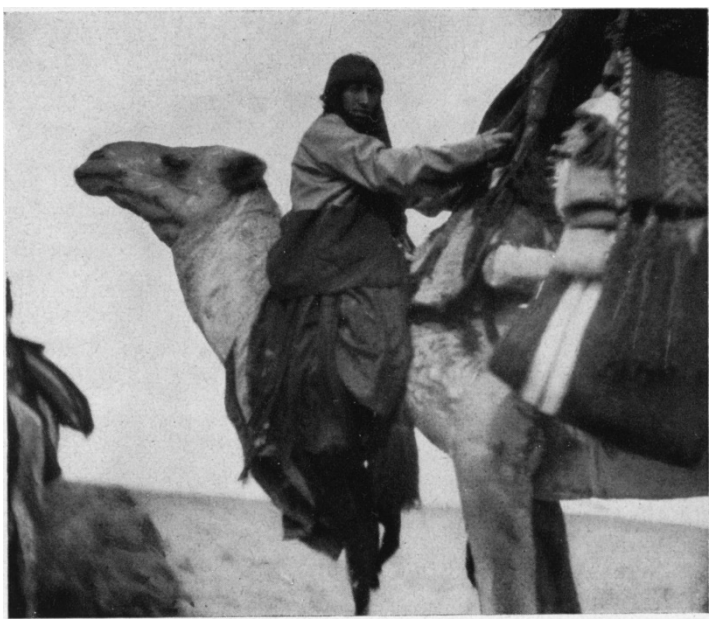
On the left, the falcon and the falconer

[88]/2



XXII. (above): Mithgäl Pasha and his son Sulfan (below): Camels are being milked

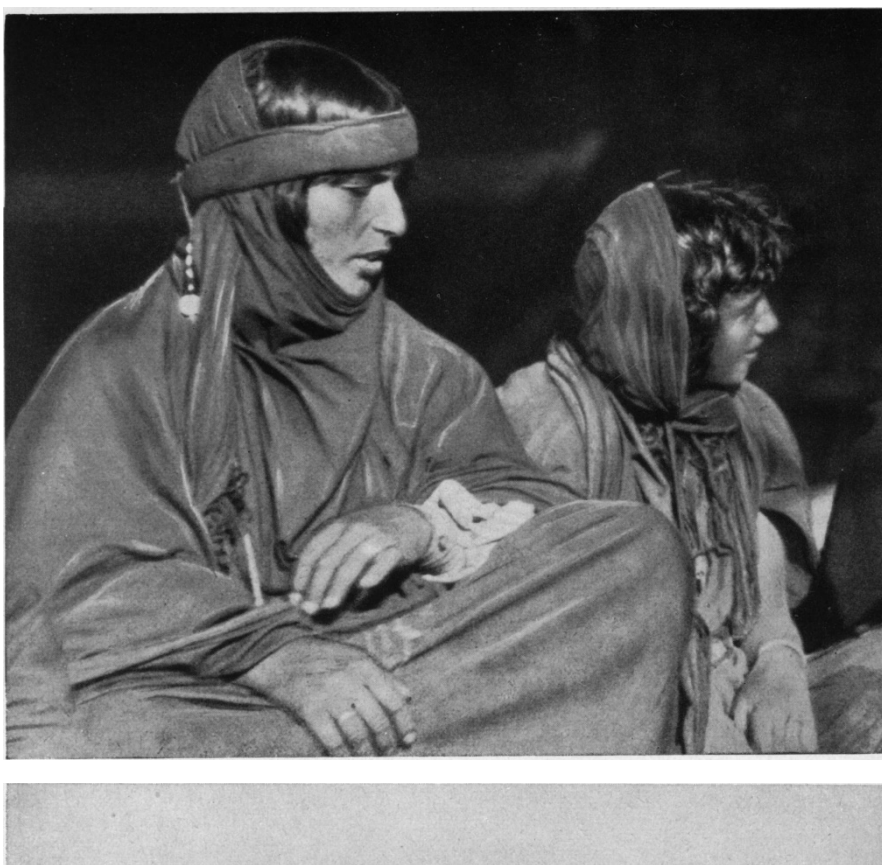
[88]/3

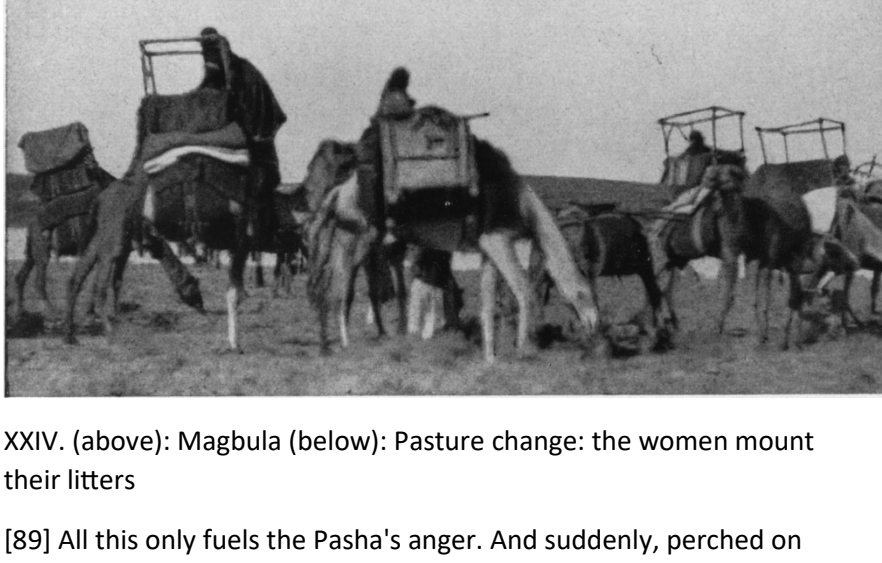


XXIII. (above): Chatma, the Sultan's younger wife, sews in the tent

(below): Chatma mounts her camel

[88]/4





XXIV. (above): Magbula (below): Pasture change: the women mount their litters

[89] All this only fuels the Pasha's anger. And suddenly, perched on Sat'a's perhaps still-warm bed, is the other: Tarfa, the whore—chewing something stolen in her mouth, triumph gleaming in her eyes.

Finally, Sat'a, bleeding, frees herself and escapes from the tent. The Pasha follows a few steps and chases her away with "shh! shh!", as one might curse an animal. With terrible curses, she flees out into the night. One hears Tamam's disguised voice, calling after her with feigned gentleness: "Flee to your mother!" Mithgål stands groaning, panting, completely out of breath, as if he had strangled a hyena with his bare

hands. Yet there is no emotion to be felt in him; all is only the exhaustion of his fury. After a while, he says with genuine satisfaction, "Now let her go, the wicked one!" Meanwhile, outside, Sat'a trudges across the steppe toward the camp of her clan, hours away.

When things had come to this, Sitt Marjam left the Pasha's tent and spent the night with Tamam. I couldn't see what happened there myself; the tent was too far from mine. Sitt Marjam recounts:

At dawn, Tamam is awakened by her fat slave: the sun will soon rise. The time for morning prayer ends with the sunrise. Tamam remembers that she is playing the pious one here and gets up heavily—still tired from all her scheming. She goes to her rug and prepares to pray. But when the slave goes out, she breaks off in the middle of her prayer—an Islamic possibility. Then her brother Mithgål, the Pasha, appears: fresh as a fish, in boyish cheerfulness. He lays his head in his old sister's lap and lets her carefully comb his fine, dark brown hair, of which he is very proud. Perhaps his city wife in Ammån trained him to such daily hair care and delousing, but I also often found loving care of one's hair out in the steppes. There is little sign of embarrassment towards Sitt Maryam because of yesterday's incident, only a casual concern about not making herself unpopular.

[90] He asks Sitt Marjam: "Why did you leave my tent?" She replies: "Wasn't it better?" He laughs with vain self-importance: "Of course!" When asked what Sat'a had actually done wrong, he giggles like a coy girl and gives no answer. Sitt Marjam says she had always urged the two women to get along, but unfortunately to no avail. To this, Mithgal replied: "Yes, and if one doesn't listen, you have to do it like I do."

Then Sitt Marsam returns to the Pasha's tent and finds Tarfa still triumphant, and beside her Hissa, inwardly seething with rage, outwardly subservient, but in such a way that nothing gets done and nothing is in order. In response to Sitt Marjam's question, she states very emphatically that Sat'a will return. She recounts that the Pasha—even before Tarfa's time—had already banished Sat'a twice for trivial reasons. Now Tarfa becomes animated and eagerly inquires about this. More women come into the tent, and everyone laughs at the situation. Finally, Mithgal also arrives and smiles awkwardly. He turns to Hissa with the question: what is to be done now that there is no mistress to manage the household? Hissa simply throws the question back at him. Everyone knows that Tarfa is useless in managing the household. Mithgal looks somewhat helpless, like a boy caught red-handed. He keeps circling around Hissa, beating around the bush. She looks serious and shrugs her shoulders at his questions or remains silent, offended, or occasionally gives a short answer that roughly means: as far as I'm concerned, everything can go to hell. She can afford to do this because she knows that they need her. In between, she sits with downcast eyes, as if none of it concerns her. She knows how best to protect the interests of her banished mistress—and her own interests. Ultimately, she profits from all this rivalry. When the Pasha finally leaves the women's quarters, all the women laugh audibly behind him. He turns around, laughing, and playfully threatens them.

Now he comes over to the men's room, where I have also settled in by now. I believed I would learn the most truth if I showed the least involvement.

[91] I kept myself as much to the side as possible so as not to disturb the natural course of events. However, I did manage to capture some expressive images, unfortunately not of the banishment itself, as that took place at night, but of those involved during the course of these events and upon Sat'a's return. Fortunately, some of these images were not destroyed later during the break-in at my tent. They are among the most important pieces in my archive. Some of them can be found on plates XIX, XX, and XXIX.

In the men's tent, a similar atmosphere prevails as over there: people are joking and whispering this and that to each other. Suddenly, a slave leads out the Pasha's white mare. He jumps up and rides off without saying goodbye. He leaves the development of events in the camp to chance. One day he will return and will then see how everything stands. Worry is a state that a Bedouin cannot endure.

14. The Love Potion

I will never forget the strange sight of Tarfa praying.

Whether Tarfa was beautiful, I will not decide. That is for her master to judge, who for her sake had shamefully punished and banished the best of his wives. What made such a deep impression on me at the time was neither Tarfa's beauty nor the grace of her gestures, but this: that she was praying—she, whom I had never seen pray before. And furthermore: she prayed between sunrise and noon, that is, at a time when no other Muslim prays, and her posture during prayer was not befitting a Muslim. But I myself was already so deeply immersed in the ever-same rhythm of Arab life that I could no longer imagine anything entirely new within it.

A few days after Sat'a's expulsion, things happened as they always do in such Bedouin marital disputes. When the tent master is away, the

banished woman comes with pack camels and fetches the saddles, water skins, and all the tent equipment that belongs to her.

[92] This was her right according to Bedouin law: one could disrupt this act, make its execution difficult, but one could not completely prevent it.

Sat'a had an open nature – as far as this is possible for an Arab woman who does not have control over herself, but lives with the awareness of being the purchased property of a man. I had never seen or heard Arab women rage as Sat'a raged that morning as she cleared out the tent. It was a liberating outburst, such as is rarely possible in the life of an Arab woman. And even this would certainly not have occurred had it not been for the prevailing awareness throughout the camp: the sheikh is far away.

While Sat'a raged and cleared things out and ripped open the water hoses so that the precious liquid flowed and seeped into the tent floor, Tarfa sat on her sacks, smiling mockingly, and pretended not to pay attention. Neither man nor woman dared to help Sat'a, not even her slave girls, for all feared the Pasha's wrath. Only a few black slave children obediently acted under her command. Admittedly, they, especially the girls, initially acted as if they were refusing. But that was only for show: partly caution, partly habit. The girls there are trained in the art of deception from an early age. Overzealous servants of the Pasha interfere by untying the ropes of the pack camels and driving the animals away. The game drags on, but finally comes to an end. The animals are loaded and ready to march. Then Sat'a's little son, four-year-old Ali ben Mithgal, runs out of the tent to his mother and clings to her hand. But before he sets off with her, he turns around once more to his father's tent and opens his mouth to utter a long, memorized curse. He curses his own father and his father's father, and his house and all who are in it. The entire camp hears the boy's curse and remains silent. Then they prepare to depart: Sat'a and her little son and the laden animals. They do not look back, and no one watches them go. The onlookers disperse, and everyday life returns to the camp.

[93] But now came the strange part. As soon as Tarfa found herself alone in Sat'a's deserted tent, she began pacing back and forth in visible agitation. Then she stopped and raised her hands to the sky. It was clear that she was speaking earnestly, but I was too far away—I was sitting in my tent—and could not understand her words. Yet there could be no doubt that she was praying. Then she raised one finger, then another, and then a third, as if she were counting out to God what she would give him if he helped her. I waited anxiously to see if she would now adopt one of those learned postures that Islam prescribes for those who pray. But nothing of the sort happened. It was a desperate prayer from someone who otherwise never prayed. The Bedouin of the steppes are the most Arab of Arabs, but the worst Muslims. What I saw here would not have been possible among settled people: among Arab farmers and city dwellers. There, all prayer is a meticulously regulated sequence of learned gestures. They pray five times a day, when the call to prayer rings out from the minarets. And each prayer has its own particular sequence of gestures of the head and hands, of bowing and lowering the forehead to the ground. In these gestures lies an important part of Islamic culture and education. Here in the steppe, only the great tent-lords pray in this way: it is a sign of their dignity. Otherwise, people don't pray at all, or—as Tarfa prayed—out of the fear of the moment and as an act of supplication.

When I looked again, Tarfa had left the tent. She walked straight towards me. Her gait was unsteady, almost limping, like that of someone in pain. Mocking words came to mind, words I had overheard from the conversation of the slave women. The painful gait was a consequence of the tent-lord's all too rough caresses. Tarfa now stood in front of my tent, at the entrance of which I was sitting on my rug, and greeted me solemnly with the Salâm. I made room for her and invited her to sit down. She glanced shyly around and then actually sat down. This wasn't the first time. She had come before on several occasions to secure gifts. But today—it was easy to see—she wanted something quite special.

[94] If the visitor had been a man, I would have roasted, ground, and brewed coffee. But this strict rule doesn't apply to women, because it's already against the rules for a woman to visit a man. We were both very aware of this. That's why I broke the silence: "Tarfa, you have prayed." She nodded. "May God grant you what you ask for!" With that, I reached into a sack full of sugared almonds and offered her a handful. She said, "May God grant you wealth and health!" I replied, according to custom, "To you twice the wealth and double the health!" and gave her a handful of sugar cubes. She said, "Give me medicine for my husband's love, so that he will never call the other woman back."

Then both things became clear to me: the content of her formless prayer and also the purpose of her coming. Both were the same. And when she saw me hesitate, she nervously tugged and fidgeted with her shirt and headscarf, looked around, and stood up: "Give it to me quickly, I must go."

I admit, I was not prepared for this request. I couldn't simply refuse it; that would violate the rules of Arab etiquette. Otherwise, I would have become a miser or an incompetent in her eyes, or both. Then both of my

roles would have been compromised: the role of the great sheikh and the role of the doctor. For the time being, there was only one solution for me: to gain time. So I said, "O Tarfa, my daughter, be patient. Love potions are prepared at night, for the sun destroys their power. Come tonight, when the full moon stands two spear-lengths high in the sky. Then I must take three drops of fresh blood from your body and mix them into the potion that your husband is to drink, otherwise it will not ignite love for you alone, but for every woman." - And secretly I thought: she won't come. How can she dare to go to a man's tent on a bright full moon night? If the sheikh finds out, he will kill her. - I spoke and thought in the manner of an Oriental: Postponement is tantamount to cancellation. But Tarfa said, "I will come," and disappeared.

And she came again. I was already fast asleep and suddenly felt a tap. Without thinking, I reached for my Mauser pistol, but then quickly realized what was happening, and that's when I became truly frightened.

[95] She's utterly insane! was my first thought – how could she dare to do such a thing! If this were discovered – and it was sure to be discovered – then there would be a terrible end. Then it would be said of me: he lured the sheikh's wife into his tent at night, and that is nothing less than: he has shamefully betrayed his host. For the woman is her husband's property, like any other possession: she is bought for five or more camels. The guest is inviolable to the Bedouin, as long as he himself respects the laws of hospitality. But if he violates them, then – woe betide him!

It was perfectly clear: there was only one thing to do: get Tarfa out! Without hesitation, I jumped up and called out (in a whisper, of course): "Flee, Tarfa, flee from my tent! We have been betrayed!" She didn't understand immediately and glared at me with that typical expression of strained stupidity that disfigures even the prettiest face and leaves no room for hope. So I grabbed her by the neck and hurled her out of the tent's shadow into the moonlight: "Quick, get away – the sheikh is here, your husband!" She disappeared in a flash. The whole thing had lasted at most half a minute. I noticed that I was still standing in the moonlight with a gesturing hand. Then I retreated into the tent's shadow, breathed a sigh of relief, and shook myself – perhaps with laughter. Then I peered through the cracks of my tent and saw more than one scout outside. Anyone who knows the jealousy of Arab men knows that now it was time to be vigilant. As long as the sheikh remained away, the danger wasn't great. But he could be back before sunrise. In the meantime, the best thing to do was to sleep as soundly as possible. That's what I did, and nobody disturbed me. The barking of the dogs, sometimes the groaning and laughing of a prowling hyena in the distance – the usual night sounds. Otherwise, there was nothing.

At dawn, shortly after the morning prayer, which I performed very solemnly in place of the "Sheikh of Sheikhs"—this, too, was one of my host's titles—I went into the men's section of his tent and sat down in the place of honor among the coffee drinkers. It wasn't as comfortable today as usual, because the saddles that normally served as armrests were missing. Sat'a had brought them.

[96] I was served coffee. But the coffee was spicy as always. I said: "Peace be with you. Praise be to God that this night passed without harm to you, O Beni Sakhr, and without harm to me!" Meanwhile, I subtly observed the faces of those I knew secretly hated me. They spoke to each other with their eyes, but no one opened their mouth. Then I knew that everything was at stake. I stretched comfortably and sipped the first cup of bitter, spicy coffee with pleasure. Then I continued: "God sends us dreams to warn us. What a night! I lay on the ground and saw the steppe stirring all around me - were they jerboas or were they thorny lizards or vipers? It came closer and closer, half hopping, half crawling, or both at once. My hair stood on end, for I could not move - the earth held me fast with iron clamps. And then they were upon me, and now I saw who it was: they were Arabs like us, they were the Howeitat, your blood enemies, those wicked dogs! And you? You slept. And how you slept! I heard you snoring: it sounded like the rumination of camels, only much, much louder. But I couldn't wake you, for the earth wouldn't let me go. I screamed - or rather, I wanted to scream: "Up, Beni Sakhr, blood brothers, brothers, rise up! The enemy is at your tents!" but I couldn't utter a sound. But the enemy became countless like the pebbles of the steppe. It glittered like dew-covered flint in the moonlight - those were the gleaming daggers in their hands. And already they began to put the blades to your snoring throats, brothers, when finally - ah, ah! I thought the earth would split open beneath me, but I was free, and I got up and reached out—what was I reaching for? Was I still dreaming or was I awake? It was the ghoul, the hideous desert troll in the form of a woman. I pushed her out into the moonlight and cursed her until she disappeared. Then the Howetat were gone too, and I saw nothing but your black huts and the horses and the dogs, and I heard your chattering voices from here and there around the fires, and everything was as usual. So I lay down again without warning you, for it was probably all just a terrible dream. And yet I would swear that I was awake when I pushed the ghoul out of my tent.

[97] They handed me the second cup of coffee, and through half-closed eyelids I saw them smiling slyly at each other, as if they knew something

I didn't. I leaned back, as if exhausted by the abundance of stories. Then one of them began to tell how he too had once seen the ghoul, but it was just a tall tale with which he thought he could mock me in front of the others without me noticing. Then another told a story, then a third, and they giggled to themselves. When the fourth cup of coffee arrived, I spoke up again and said: "The strangest thing was what the ghoul said to me when I caught her. She said: 'Give me some medicine, I have a stomach ache.'" "Now that I think about it, it seems almost cruel that I threw her out." A ripple of movement went through the circle of coffee drinkers, and they could no longer contain themselves and roared with laughter. Only a few older women tried to control themselves, holding their headscarves over their mouths so that their laughter wouldn't be seen. But I knew that the danger was now receding: not only for me, but also for Tarfa. I looked around as if surprised and kept my expression impassive.

Around midday, the sheikh arrived. They whispered a lot with him: first he took one aside, then another. Every now and then, I chimed in with whispers about all sorts of important matters. I carefully observed how he treated Tarfa. But there was nothing unusual. In the evening, the men gathered around the coffee fire as usual. But from next door, from the women's quarters, from which we were separated only by a carpet, mysterious sounds could be heard. Every now and then, a wave of strangely intoxicating scents wafted through. Everyone knew that Tarfa was preparing herself there to receive her husband. And suddenly, the heavy, black goatskin fabric of the tent roof lowered itself over us in a deep, billowing curve. That is the sign of the waiting wife. From her bed, she moves the central support beam of the tent, thus indicating: I am ready to receive you. Mithgål could barely conceal his impatience. He still loved her, that was clear—he loved her even without a love potion. The guests rose and departed in the Bedouin manner, that is, without saying goodbye. Only a black slave remained as a guard in the men's quarters.

[98] According to all human reckoning, I was not in any danger that night, at least not from my hosts, the Beni Sakhr. If something did happen, so be it. I had done what I could to prevent it. With such thoughts, I made my way to my tent and listened for a while to the sounds of the steppe night until I fell fast asleep.

In the morning, before the morning prayer, the sheikh woke me himself and said that we—he and I—should ride to his son's camp that day, which was a day's ride away. I myself, with Sitt Maryam and my tent and all my belongings, would stay there, while he and a few riders would accompany me. This suggestion didn't seem entirely straightforward to me, although I myself wished to leave. Why did he want to do this precisely today, when all sorts of important things were about to happen? It's an old trick, not only among the Bedouin, to make inconvenient people disappear somewhere along the way: one is attacked by the enemy during a journey, and then the enemy is blamed. But ultimately, if they really wanted to kill me, they would do it sooner or later anyway. Perhaps Mithgal really only wanted to get me away from the camp so that any reason for gossip about Tarfa would be eliminated in the future. So I agreed, took down my tent, and got ready to travel.

15. To the camels!

The importance of my departure must have soon slipped my host's mind, for the morning passed, and so did midday, without anything happening. My own tent was taken down, and I sat sometimes in Mithgal's men's quarters, sometimes in the women's quarters, and waited. I hadn't seen him since morning; he was over at his "fortress" in Umm el-Amad. In the late afternoon, he appeared with his scribe, whom he had apparently had summoned from Amman. To my question, "Are we riding at night?" He replied that he would provide me with people, and that meant: put your tent back up! But I firmly rejected that idea: it was against the custom of the German Bedouins to camp in the same place twice.

[99] He said, "Well then, my tent is yours. I had the most important pieces of my luggage taken to his women's quarters and placed under the care of Sitt Maryam."

The scribe entered the women's quarters without hesitation and greeted all the women present, including the slave girls, with a handshake, looking at each of them kindly and exchanging a few polite words with some. There was no doubt that they liked him and respected him at the same time, which is not easily achieved with Arab women when someone treats them with humanity. Then the scribe went into the men's quarters, where a large assembly of men with serious expressions sat around the coffee fire, Mithqal in the place of honor. I could see everything from the women's quarters, across the carpet, where I stood in deep shadow with Sitt Maryam. I wondered: should I go over there? and decided to stay where I was, so as not to distract from the unfolding events in any way. I knew: no one would miss me now; they had nothing on their minds but the marriage negotiations concerning Sat'a. By now it had become night, but the half-moon hung in the sky. I sat down on one

of the large sacks of wheat, which placed me even deeper in the tent's shadow, and looked across the carpet.

I watched and listened as the Pasha dictated to the scribe. But before each sentence, he consulted with an older man who sat beside him, a dignified, shrewd fellow. The content of the letter consisted of legal grounds for divorcing Sat'a, apparently a justification to her family. I looked at the faces of this assembly of men and understood that every sentence written here was a lie. Some of them made a game of cornering Mithqal with questions and interjections. Every true Bedouin is a free man, even in relation to the head of his clan and tribe: the sheikh is only first among equals. The things that were happening here did not enhance his reputation, and his Maintaining a position in this trade was not easy. But the old shrewd man, who enjoyed everyone's trust, skillfully helped Mithgål out of all difficulties.

[100] When I turned around to exchange a comment with Sitt Marjam, my eyes fell on the "water part" of the women's room, i.e. h. the part where the large, bulging water hoses are otherwise located. Now, after Sat'a had so successfully cleared out, all that stood here was a shabby, lonely, half-empty hose, borrowed from Tamåm. This emptiness made the room very clear. Tarfa stood there completely naked and carefully poured warm water over herself, which she scooped out of a basin with her cupped hand. It stood in full moonlight and the tent was open to the windward side, as it almost always was; If anyone passed by outside, he was bound to see her. But no one goes past the women's room at this hour, when all the men are gathered every evening. She had obviously forgotten me or hadn't noticed me from the start. Now she took mysterious leaves from a chest, grabbed a few glowing balls of camel dung from the fireplace with tongs and placed the leaves on them. Immediately there was a scent like incense and something bitter. Then she pulled a shirt made of veil-like material over her head, bright red with floral patterns, and let it flow over her still wet body to the ground. No other Bedouin woman ever wears such a thing; it was certainly a gift from Mithgål, whose taste was now determined by his city wife. Then Tarfa gathered up his shirt and stepped over the glowing balls, from which the fragrant smoke rose in delicate columns. She arched her shirt over it and let it fall to the ground again, so that all the pleasant smells caught on her body. She stayed like that for a long time.

Then she took out a large hand mirror, sat down on her bed, which consisted of many layers of various blankets, and picked up a tiny metal jar with a metal stopper. She pulled out the stopper and looked at the long pen into which it drained. When the stopper closes the vessel, this pin protrudes like a long tongue down to the bottom. She first carefully brushed her eyebrows with this pencil, then closed her eyes and drew a firm line along her eyelashes. The jar contained antimony as a fine black powder.

[101] When the coloring was finished, she slipped under the blanket, but took the mirror with her and a few other things, which she carefully hid there. She came out and slipped back in several more times. Finally, from the bed, she slowly pulled the middle tent pole that supported the roof to the side and then lifted it completely off so that only the tent roof hung down in a low billow. Then she pulled the top blanket over her head.

I knew that Mithgål would not be long in coming. My blankets and the large sheepskin lay on the ground; I quickly put on my belt and whatever was hanging from it, stretched out and covered myself as if I was sleeping. And soon the conversation in the men's room fell silent. Mithgål appeared, walked without delay towards Tarfa's bed, threw off his cloak and disappeared there under the blanket.

When I got up early in the morning, Mithgål asked why I had stayed away from the meeting? I shrugged and said, "I saw my seat taken." Then he laughed and was satisfied. Then I suddenly asked: "What exactly did Sat'a do?" Then he said with a sworn face: "Sat'a will never return!" I say: "Oh, what a pity! I promised her the silk. Now I have to take the silk to Imm Sultån "by the camels. To which he: "Imm Sultån doesn't need silk, she's a Bedouin." I reply: "Isn't Sat'a also a Bedouin?" Then he laughs: “Sat'a is coming back tomorrow.

Now he prepared to return to Ammån. With my departure "to the camels" there seemed to be time, and it became clear to me that this matter needed further attention. Perhaps Mithgål was ashamed because he had no rides here and only a few pack camels, and things weren't any better with horses. I came to Ammån in a car and since then I haven't gotten any riding or pack animals. I wanted to do that outside “with the camels.” Perhaps there was a point of embarrassment here. I took the clerk aside, who wanted to ride with Mithgål to Ammån, and asked him to send me the driver Jahja with his red car from Ammån, so that I would negotiate with him. Jahja was a hideous fellow, but if anyone dared to go out into the steppe, it was him.

[102] He was good friends with the Beni Sachr. The writer promised me "by the life of the Prophet." Mithgål overheard part of this conversation and became increasingly cheerful. Then they rode away.

One morning, Sheik Chålid, a nephew of Mithgål, who was currently living at the nearby castle el=Gastal[1], visited me. He invited me and brought a horse with him to kidnap me. It was fine with me if there could be farmers from Djebel el-Khalil there that I wanted to avoid. When I returned in the evening and entered the women's room in Mithgål, Sat'a was sitting on the carpet washing her hair. She didn't pay attention to me when I entered and I didn't say anything. I took my camera and prepared it to shoot. Then I spoke to her and grabbed some pictures from our conversation. One of them is shown on our plate XIX. The recording came when I had just mentioned the name Tarfa in conversation: hatred, pain and fear, all flaring up at the same time - with my next word it was already extinguished.

The next morning, very early, there was a large red car driven by Jahja, with Mithgål and two other Bedouins sitting in it. Aha, now suddenly it worked! I had it charged straight away, while I took Jahja aside and negotiated with him with favorable results. Mithgål was in a good mood and didn't notice that Tarfa was sitting next to the carpet in his women's room again because Sat'a wouldn't tolerate her on the carpet. He assured me that he would be happy to travel with me to el=Djôf, even to Teima. These places belonged to the Wahhabi king of the Obn Sa'ud clan, who were enemies of the Beni Sachr and the Prince of Transjordan; But he threw this objection aside: if he were traveling as the prince's envoy with a political mission, every path would be open to him. By God, he had learned a lot in Ammån!

We were finally ready to go around midday. Then we went out, deeper and deeper into the steppe. In the evening we reached the “Hyänental”, a side valley to Wådi Sirhån.

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[1] His truly original Semitic face is shown in panels XVII and XXXIV (top picture).

[103]

There was the large tent camp of Sultån, Mithgål's son, with endless herds of camels that marched to the camp in long trains.

We came at the right time, because in the tents of Arabia the true day only begins in the evening. Not like we do in the sense of finishing work after work. There is no working day because work is a curse and a shame. All manual labor in the Bedouin camp is done by women, slaves, farmers and craftsmen. Only two types of effort seem honorable here: hunting, especially with trained falcons, and knightly robbery and warfare. Otherwise the days flow by, almost one after the other: you are there, you are not completely awake and you are not completely asleep, you drink a delicious, finely spiced coffee from tiny cups and from time to time eat a terrible gray porridge that the women prepare in their separate part of the tent and whose ingredients are not discussed. Otherwise, of course, there is a lot of talking among the full Bedouins when the men are crouching or lying around the glowing pile of camel dung over which the coffee is boiling. Just as waking never finally ends and sleeping begins or vice versa, there is also no end to the conversation: now someone falls asleep here and now someone there, and you rush to pull the blanket over their head; and then they wake up again and engage in conversation. But the conversation always moves on the spot. It is as undeveloped as the soul of the Bedouin. You are as far along in the morning as you are in the evening; as an old man you are still where you were as a boy. You don't mature. You're there and you're done.

All this twilight existence is supported by the comforting certainty that the camels are grazing. Yes, the camels - when they stand and graze with their heads on the ground, the sides of their bodies rise and fall like the archways of desert cities. Bedouin life is unthinkable without the dromedaries. During the day they spread out over almost unmissable areas to pluck the hard bushes that grow here and there between the flint covering of the steppe. Anyone who needs a mount must have it before daybreak, because the camels are far away during the day.

[104] Only in the evening, when the real day begins for the Bedouins, do the animals move into camp: long-legged, dignified and slow, in unpredictable movements. Then they gather in groups between the black tents: the stallions by themselves and the mares by themselves, and with the mothers the colts. They stand hesitantly for a while with a loud roar, then one after the other drops to their knees, folds their hind legs together and remains motionless. The foals place their slender, soft necks over their mother's neck and then no longer move. Only the jaws grind and grind. It goes through the entire camp like a noise and forms the basic tone of a melody: this grinding of the ruminants. And this grinding also lasts almost all night and forms the background, even the underground, of all Bedouin existence. The camels graze and digest. Where this ends, the Bedouin way of life ends. The desert is empty, the steppe is very barren, people don't work, but camels graze everywhere.

16. Curiosity

In the last chapters of this book I will try to give a bit of an overview of the essential content of the time that I spent - moving from pasture to

pasture with the camels - in the flint steppe of the Sirhän region. Previously, some events from the same period were reported, which also provide some insight into Bedouin life.

Mithgål led me to his son Sultån, a beardless young man of about twenty who, as he greeted me, stared wordlessly at me with strangely dull eyes. The tents here in the ever-migrating camel residence of Mithgål seemed to be longer and more spacious than those "at the sheep's," at least the sheikh's tent. Later, when Emir Abdallah was a guest here, the partition between the men's room and the women's room was removed, but the women were banished to a third small room, which then served as a kitchen. The two combined rooms now formed a long banquet hall, half of which was covered with an enormous carpet; The prince and his entourage and the other honored guests sat down on this to eat.

[104]/1

XXV. (above): Men gossiping in the tent (below): Camels before departure

[104]/2 XXVI.

(above): Young falcon in the tent (below): Three hunting falcons sit, hooded and tied with short thongs, motionless on their padded perches

[104]/3

XXVII. Djârid

[104]/4

XXVIII. An Outcast

[105] Of the three brass coffee pots in this tent, the largest is so high that it towers over a squatting man[1]. The best decoration of the tent, however, are three magnificent hunting falcons, which - capped with their hoods and tied with a rope as a short shackle - sit motionless on padded sticks. (Plate XXVI.)

After perhaps a week, I took Mithgål aside and pointed to the time of winter rains and growth, the time when even the steppe is green, the time of unlimited freedom of movement for the Bedouin, in a word: the time of great knightly raids, the time of the Ghasawåt[2]. He agreed with me enthusiastically and then said that he had to go back to Amman tomorrow: a messenger from Emir Abdallah was there to summon him. Ambassadors from King Ibn Sa'üd had appeared in Ammån, and he, the Emir's field marshal, was not allowed to be absent from the negotiations. But his son stays here, and he too is a great Ghäsi, a mighty raid hero. It gradually dawned on me that something was wrong with

the raids[3]. He promised he would come back in a week and then take care of everything. In the meantime he ceremoniously gave me a riding camel named Ighne (it wasn't his best) and provided me with four pack camels for Sitt Marsam and my luggage. For my constant service he appointed a man who was dependent on him, named Djårid (Plate XXVII). He also recommended me to the black slave Adwån, a licked guy with all the hallmarks of previous city practice. Then he rode westward again. But we broke camp and looked for a new pasture in a southeasterly direction.

Mithgål really came back. At that time we were camping in the "Wolfslache" (Ghadir edh=Dhib), and one day he was suddenly there. I don't know whether there was a week or a month or more in between: time loses all measure in the steppes of Arabia.

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[1] According to Mithgål's statement and joint calculation, his tent household "near the camels" has an annual coffee consumption worth 21 English gold pounds.

[2] But the Ghasu (razu, pl. razawât) or similar. pp. 75 and 129.

[3] See p. 76.

[106] But it was felt that he wouldn't stay this time either. It is difficult to decide whether it was really “political” concerns that bound him westward or human ones.

In Sultån's women's room was his mother, Imm Sultan, almost an old woman, although she was perhaps no older than 35 years old. Her face was broad and round, her body slender and heavy: an unduin appearance. In some ways this was also true of Ithreija, her older daughter-in-law. Her face was long and narrow, quite different from that of the Imm Sultån, and her body was neither wide nor really heavy, and yet there was something burdensome, even something oppressive, in her appearance and in her entire being. Chatma, Sultan's younger wife, was very different from her. We will meet both later[1]. And then there was Magbüla the Scherarise, whose name you heard all the time day and night. If something was missing somewhere, it would come from the mouth of Sultån or his mother or one of his wives: "Magbüla! jä Magbûla!"

On the first night after Mithgål's return, Magbüla was sent to my tent to wake me up and tell Sultån that he was sick. I found him shaken with a violent fever and with him his father Mithgål and his younger wife Chatma. I had my medical kit brought in and did what I had to do until the attack passed. The boy then slept soundly and was visibly better in the morning. In the next few days there were no more violent attacks. I strongly advised him to guard his bed for a few days and nights so that I, Sitt Marsam and Chatma, could nurse him back to health. His father wanted that too, and since the pasture provided food for the camels for a few days, the camp didn't need to be broken up: he could heal. But he didn't obey.

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[1] See Chapter 20: “Arab women’s fate.” The two women of Sultån can be found on our panels XXIII, XXXI, XXXI, Sultån on panel XXII (top picture on the right. - Ithreija is the dialect form for Thureija. Magbüla the Scherarlje, which is told about later, can be found on panel XXIV on the left.

[107] The very next day he rode out hunting, carrying the falcon on steppe hares. I warned Mithgål, but he shrugged and let the boy be. After a week, Mithgål set off again for Imm elAmad and Amman.

Sultån's fever disappeared as often as I tended to him, only to return again. Sometimes I placed a wet bandage on his forehead. He would tie it tightly and ride out hunting when he thought I wasn't noticing. The bandage would dry out and become completely useless. But he couldn't imagine its healing power as anything other than magic. And one day he too disappeared to Amman, a story that will be told later. For the time being, I was glad he was gone: I was rid of the thankless task of caring for him and could sleep many a night.

One evening—we had since moved south towards Wadi el-Ghadaf—I carefully secured the contents of my tent, locked the leather cases containing my "Klein=Mentor" (a type of hunting comrade), the SLR camera, and the film cartridges, threw clothes and bags on top, and hid the binoculars and various other items. Then I belted myself with the cartridge pouch and the weapon belt, in which hung a tried and tested ten-shot Mauser pistol. I had only intended to go to the women's quarters, but even there, a Bedouin takes his weapon, for going without a weapon is unworthy of a gentleman—much like a gentleman in Germany going out without a tie and collar. I carefully blocked the entrance to my tent, attached strong cords to it, tied them together, and memorized everything.

By then, night had fallen, a new moon night on the steppe. The huts lined the two banks of a still-dry riverbed. Winter had arrived; it rained now and then, and this riverbed could suddenly fill with raging water.

But now only a few brown puddles glimmered above the surface, from which the herds of camels drank in the morning and evening, and from which the women drew water for the household. All of this now sank from one moment to the next into ever blacker night, interrupted only by the embers of the fires.

[108] One of them was on the other side of the valley, marking the camp of Sheikh Guftån, a relative of Mithgål. He is the father of Chatma, Sultån's favorite wife. He had solemnly invited me to a meal the day after tomorrow. But now I felt drawn to the quarters of my closer friend and host, Mithgål, and I confess: it wasn't because he is a more powerful sheikh than Guftån, with richer possessions and a more feared reputation, but for another reason: because he wasn't there at that time. Thus, I could easily take leave from the otherwise unavoidable coffee break in the men's quarters. Bedouin company is pleasant as long as one is fresh and willing to participate in the conversation. But it is dreadful for the weary. They talk and talk and talk, and from time to time, they expect a reply. But that evening, all I wanted was to lie by the fire, comfortably wrapped in my thick sheepskin, watching the flames dance, and occasionally throwing in a joke or two into the women's conversation. The women talked and talked, no less than the men, but no man was obligated to listen to them.

So, as I approached the pasha's tent, I respectfully gave the men's divan a wide berth—not only to avoid the far-reaching ropes that anchored the birch huts, but also to escape their sight. If they saw me and recognized me, I would be under their spell and their endless nighttime chatter. I could clearly see them all gathered there: the black slave Adwån, above all, a nuisance to me—a servant with a masterly air, a lackey of the desert. Now he sat before the fire, pouring heavy coffee from the large brass pots into three tiny bowls, which then—for the umpteenth time, I wondered?—made their way around. Someone had just thrown dry brushwood into the flames: they flared up and shone further out, so that I could be seen. But I quickly hid among the reclining camels, whose grinding jaws surrounded me with a nourishing sound. When the flames died down, I strode quickly into the women's room.

[109] They rose from the ground in greeting and showed me to the place of honor on the carpet. Sitt Marjam was already asleep: she was feigning illness to get a good night's sleep. To my left lay Chatma and to my right Ithreija, the two wives of Sultån. Opposite me, however, sat Imm Sultån, and beside her, Magbüla. Yes, Magbüla! The one with the beautiful name—it means "the accepted one," also "the pleasant one"—to which her sharp face with its disappointed yet greedy expression didn't quite match. There were also ancient women and young girls and children of both sexes and both races: brownish children of masters and black slaves, all mixed together in a colorful tangle. But the children weren't bothering anyone now, for they had fallen asleep, each wherever they happened to be, and they slept as Bedouins do: a predatory sleep with blinking, half-open eyes.

Magbüla's eyes blinked too, but not sleepily, rather awake and ready to pounce. I avoided looking at her, but I sensed that something was amiss with her. Magbüla was no longer young by Bedouin standards. I had once asked her, "How old do you think you are, Magbåla?" Then she said, "Seventeen." "What," I said at the time, "and I'm already thirty-eight!"—But I really was. She looked at me in astonishment and said, "That many?" and after a pause, "Then I'm twenty-two." That was tantamount to a marriage proposal. For weeks I'd had the impression that she wanted to become my second wife in my "harem." In truth, she was certainly much closer to thirty, and that means something. There, girls are married off at twelve, even ten.

Magbåla could dance, and how! Just two days ago I had seen her dancing at a wedding. In the firelight, she whirled back and forth before the line of young men clapping in time to the music—faster and faster, more and more intensely, more and more wildly. Magbåla didn't belong to the tribe she lived with, but to the Scherarât tribe. The Scherarât, however, are not considered full Bedouins, and no full Bedouin is allowed to marry a girl from this less esteemed tribe. Of course, she never told me a word about any of this.

[110] Not even about the fact that she wasn't a girl, but the runaway wife of a Sherâri, who had begged for and received the protection of my host. Since then, she had lived here among the Beni Sachr, tolerated, valued, and indispensable in the household, exploited in a position of service. She wasn't happy about it.

When I had settled down, there was silence. People were still a little unsettled by the events of the afternoon. Only hours had passed since I had been loudly ranting in this very same hut. Sultån had been lying ill, shaken by a high fever, when a motor vehicle arrived—again the red vehicle on the steppe—to take him to Emir Abdallah of Transjordan. His father was already there to hear the prince's verdict. It was, it was said, a bloody clan feud that needed to be ended. I forbade the young sheikh from receiving the newcomers, for I had given him medicine, and now he needed, above all, the strictest rest. But he only half obeyed, and when they saw and heard that I was angry, they tried with all their might to appease me. I said, “You are right, why the anger? Sultån is the free

son of the most powerful sheikh among the Beni Sachr—he has the free choice whether he wants to die or be healed. Listen to me, Sheikh Sultân! If you do as I tell you, you will be well in a few days, and after that you can receive guests and travel wherever you like. But if you do not obey me today, you will die very soon. Now do as you wish. Farewell!" And with that, I left the assembly, pushed away all those who tried to restrain me, and went to my tent. Later I learned that he had driven to Amman: more than eight hours of driving with a fever of almost 41 degrees!

The women knew all this, for every loud word carries over the carpeted wall. They must also have sensed that I didn't intend to live much longer with their tribe, for I had said: "If Sultân absolutely wants to die, he must do it alone; I will not concern myself with this matter." The thought of my leaving greatly troubled the women, for they felt they had not yet extracted enough gifts from me; and that was a point on which their conscience was sensitive.

[111] Cautiously, they probed the area, and I listened with amusement until I reached the point of their desire, then I said: "My dear ones, why don't you speak more clearly? Just say what you want! Tell me, Imm Sultân, what do you want?"

This question wasn't as harmless as it sounds. There are, after all, fixed rules of conversation in Arab life: there are certain questions to which only one answer is possible, and any other answer would be a breach of etiquette. To the question: What do you want? the answer is: Your well-being! There is no other answer. And so Imm Sultân spoke to me: "I want your well-being." – "And you, Ithreija?" – "Your well-being." – "And you, Chatma?" "Your well-being. Truly, my trick had succeeded, and I had escaped. The three were silenced, and the others had no claim to gifts. Or who else was sitting there with watchful, blinking eyes? Ah, Magbüla. I was plagued by hubris, and I said, 'Magbüla, and what do you want from me?' Then her eyes sprang open and seized me like tiger's paws: 'I want you myself—so help me God!'

There I sat with my wisdom. The women laughed—I don't know if at me or at Magbüla's audacity. What should I say? I couldn't think of anything cleverer than: 'Enti magbûla!' That means: You are accepted! and was meant to be a play on her name, for it also means: You are Magbüla! in the sense of: That was truly Magbüla! But she wasn't playing games; she simply took it quite seriously.

" I felt uneasy. I looked out into the night—toward where my tent stood. I considered the possibilities of an orderly retreat. There was nothing to see out there. The fire cast a dim glow on the still-raised heads of the encamped camels closest to the women's quarters of the tent. Beyond them, one could sense many more such heads, but if one searched for them, one could not see them, for the night was impenetrable. And if one listened, one heard the flame of the fire in the hut and, from outside, the ruminating of the animals, nothing else.

[112] And out there stood my tent, close to my eye, but out of reach of my sight. And suddenly it seemed to me as if my tent were calling for my help, and as if it were almost too late. I jumped up and left—it was a relief that a farewell greeting isn't customary among Bedouins. The light from the fire stayed behind me—blinded, I ran into the large body of a reclining camel, which leaped up with a bellow—here, here had to be my tent. I felt my way forward and felt myself being grabbed by the leg —damn it! What was that? Ah, the long guy line of my own tent. Thank God!

But how? Hadn't my tent been tied up and securely fastened when I left it? How is it that it now stands wide open, the ropes flapping in the night wind? Who has the right to open my tent besides myself? But I had lit a light on these questions, and now I saw everything. I opened all the tightly sealed cases, yanked out the camera, and, most importantly, the films—my exposed films, containing all my painstaking work of months. There they lay—senselessly and ruthlessly exposed to the destructive light I myself had lit to see my loss. A hideous tangle of clothes, various equipment, provisions, and film stared back at me. I extinguished the light, though I had no hope of untangling the mess with my groping hand alone. Perhaps something could still be salvaged from the films. After an hour's work, everything light-sensitive seemed to be stowed away; I could see again. The first thing I examined was the camera. From the outside, it appeared to be fine, but it was malfunctioning: something must have broken in its delicate mechanism. I knew enough: not only were most, if not all, of the fruits of my previous labor destroyed, but further work with the camera was impossible. Nothing remained for me but departure and return home. I felt like a gravely wounded warrior, oh no—like an army defeated by treachery!

I commanded myself: Silence! and pondered: Theft in the camp, the most heinous crime among Bedouins, or what was going on here? As far as I could tell, none of my belongings were missing.

[113] So it wasn't a theft that had taken place, but rather the gratification of an unquenchable curiosity. Someone simply couldn't live without knowing the secret of my carefully stored suitcases. He had to open them—"immediately." I pondered this for a long time that night

and came to several conclusions, and finally I thought I knew the culprit. But all of that didn't make up for my losses. And finally, I must have fallen into a deep sleep, because it was already morning when I heard a voice calling me. It was Magbüla's voice. Oh, Magbüla! Magbüla was there too. I had forgotten about her. Now she was bringing me delicious camel milk and freshly baked flatbread in a wooden bowl.

I said, “Magbüla, I’ve been robbed.” – “You’ve been robbed here in the camp? That’s not true, that would be a disgrace.” – “By God, it’s a disgrace for you, and unfortunately, it’s true.” – She sensed that I was not to be trifled with now and remained silent for a while. Then she said, “What will you do?” – “I’m leaving you.” – “By God, you’re taking me with you!”

I felt anger rising in my throat, so I remained silent. I had set out full of joyful hope to provide the material for a new science: the racial soul research I myself had founded. And what was I supposed to bring back now? A Bedouin woman who couldn’t find a husband here because her tribe was despised by the tribe she now lived with? By God, that was too much! I said, “Go, Magbüla, and bring me the thief. Then we’ll talk further!” And I decided to rage like an offended god and escape in a cloud of my anger.

17. “I am the one who enters into your presence.”

But good things take time.

As I was eating my breakfast, Djårid came along, who, by order of the Pasha, was to be constantly at my service. He greeted me with particular deference, and—it seemed to me—with a somewhat anxious, watchful look. Then he squatted down on the ground in front of my tent.

[114] I said, "Djårid, bring me Jghne, my riding camel, and the four pack camels for Sitt Marjam and my luggage. I want to ride away." He asked, "Where to?" To which I replied, "What's it to you! But if you like, I'll take you with me as a companion. I'm going to Amman. You can have Jghne as your payment. The Pasha will get the four pack camels back. I'll visit him in Amman." To which Djårid replied, "Why do you want to leave? The Pasha is coming tomorrow." The matter was embarrassing for him. I said, "Perhaps the day after tomorrow, perhaps never, perhaps he's already here. But I don't want to stay in a camp where guests are robbed." Then he blurted out: “You haven’t been robbed! Look, you’re fine.” I had to laugh, even though anger still stung in my throat. I said, “You know that very well.”

Meanwhile, the camels passed by my tent, heading out to pasture, and each one cast its long morning shadow over Djårid as it went by. He rose. “Djårid, just bring me Jghne, my Dalül, and the four pack camels!” He said, “Gladly!” and left. And he never came back.

I went to find Sitt Marjam with Sultån’s wives and told them what had happened. Since the sheikhs, father and son, were not in the camp, I turned to Imm Sultån: “We’re leaving tomorrow morning.” She said, addressing herself more to Sitt Marjam than to me: “Oh no, you’re not leaving. You’re staying with us.” “Ah,” I said, “but for how long?” - "Until Sultån's return.

My situation was roughly as follows. Escaping with the consent of my fellow campers was impossible, because it was against the rules of the game for me to leave before the camp leader arrived. From my perspective, however, I was entitled to leave, since the break-in at my tent, which I still considered theft, was far worse than a violation of the rules. Theft in the camp is severely punished under Bedouin law[1] and brings shame to the entire camp. That's precisely why it simply couldn't have happened: instead of investigating the facts, they simply denied them.

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[1] Pgl. p. 46.

[115] As for the circumstances: they didn't investigate the facts, they simply denied them. But there were other reasons for keeping me detained. They knew that Mithgål still expected some gain from me and that Sultån needed me to ward off his fever whenever it struck. If I disappeared before Sultån returned, the women and the entire camp would have to fear the wrath of the sheikhs.

But it was also out of the question to keep me by force, for that too is a grave violation of the good manners of hospitality: it is deprivation of liberty (djabr) and brings shame upon the one who commits it. The only thing left for them to do was to thwart my journey. And since I was determined no longer to live in peace with them, but rather to study them from their other side, I gradually let the theft, which could not be proven, slip away and focused my attention on the djabr.

It happened of its own accord. From the tent of Imm Sultån and her daughters-in-law, I took Sitt Marjam into my own tent and asked her to bring over all her luggage. Then I went to Djårid's tent. I let my reddish-brown cloak fall around my shoulders, my weapon ready to fire. But I didn't find Djårid there; instead, his wife appeared. I asked for Djårid. She came right up to my shoulder, looked down fearfully, and grasped

my chin with her right hand. What did this strangely expressive posture mean? I won't swear that it was the Bedouin in me who understood this gesture as perfectly natural; I fear my classical education secretly aided me here. I thought of Thetis, daughter of Zeus, how she touched her Olympian father to persuade him to grant her request. Quite unexpectedly, I found myself in the role of the high Aranid, and a feeling somewhere between shuddering and grinning washed over me for a moment as, with a stony expression, I spoke mercilessly to Djårid's wife: "Woman, I ask you a second time: where is Djårid, your lord?" Then she raised her other arm and pointed out to the side where, an hour before, the long lines of camels heading for pasture had been visible. Now all one could see was the distant, glittering flint expanse of the steppe, dotted along the valley with remnants of grazed shrubs.

[116]

The camels must be very far away—and Djårid too.

I said, “O woman, why doesn’t he bring me my dalûl and the four pack camels?” The answer was, “The sheikhs have forbidden it.” The sheikhs didn’t necessarily mean father and son at the same time; with such powerful people as Mithgål and his followers, the plural form was sometimes used for each individual as a title. “The sheikhs” would then be called something like “His Highness.” I said, “Which sheikhs have the right to dispose of my property besides myself?” Then she said, “It is not your property.” The matter was now childlike in its clarity. Therefore, I asked further, “To whom does Ighne, the dalûl, belong?” She considered this for a moment and then said, “It belongs to Adwån, the slave.” Then I laughed and left.

After a few steps, Adwan appeared before me. Perhaps this was no coincidence. I beckoned him: “Adwan, a question. To whom does Jghne, the Dalül, belong?” – “Truly, it is your property, O lord!” – And how did it come into my possession? – “It is a gift from the Pasha.” – By God, so it is. Now accompany me.

I entered Mithgål’s women’s quarters with him and said: “O Imm Sultan, listen! I asked a slave you know, his name is Adwan: To whom does my Dalül belong? And he said: It is your property, O lord! Did he speak true?” – Imm Sultan remained silent, Chatma began to grin, and Ithreija, as always, looked sullenly ahead. I repeated my question: “Imm Sultan, to whom does my Dalül belong?” She looked away and said, "To the slave Adwan." Then I turned to him: "O Adwan, now complete your wisdom: to whom does my dalül belong?" After a while came the answer: "It belongs to the Sheikh." Then I exclaimed enthusiastically: "Truly, your wisdom is greater than that of King Suleiman! It belongs to the Sheikh—there is no Sheikh here but me, Muhammad Ferld Sheikh Arab el-Alman. Truly, I tell you: when the camels go into camp this evening, then you will bring me my dalül. Not Jarid will bring it, for Jarid is faithless." Then Adwan said: "The dalül belongs to the Pasha."

[117] So I raised my voice so that it could be heard in the neighboring tents, and I said, “Woe to the slave who insults his master’s name and brings him shame before the people! If you say, ‘The dalül belongs to the Pasha,’ you are saying, ‘The Pasha stole it from his guest in the camp!’ I will ask the Pasha in Amman what he thinks of this—he will tear you to pieces.” Oh, shame on you! You stole your guest’s camels and raped him!” With that, I left the Pasha’s tent and went to my own.

Evening came, and the camels arrived in the camp. But neither Djårid came, nor the slave Adwån, nor the dalül. Only late in the darkness did I hear a whisper calling me. It was Magbüla—who else? She brought a porridge for me and Sitt Marjam in a wooden vessel. I said: “Magbüla, I am no longer your guest. I am your prisoner. You raped me.” "Never! That would be a shame!" "Yes, shame on you. And I won't take another bite of bread from you." She pushed the wooden bowl into my tent, and I pushed it back. For a while, Magbüla sat sadly on the ground in front of my tent entrance, looking first at me and then at the steaming bowl, which was now getting colder and colder. But I didn't seem to care, and finally she left. Then I stepped outside the tent and spread my cloak in the direction of Mecca and honored the God of this land according to his commandments.

The next morning, before the early prayers, the first and second Magbüla were there again. She brought fresh camel milk and flatbreads that were still steaming. She sat in front of the entrance, and I watched her from my camp, probably for quite some time, because I had been asleep when she called and hadn't fully awakened. Then I said, "You have taken my camel." "We haven't taken it." "Well then, where is it?" "Right before your eyes." "Magbüla is before my eyes. Until my horse Dalül is saddled before the entrance of my tent, I will accept neither greetings nor food from you."

And Magbüla went sadly. After a little while, she returned. She was still carrying the wooden bowl and had a bundle of crispy flatbreads over her left arm.

[118] She said nothing and pushed both towards me. I looked at her wordlessly. This went on for quite some time. Then she pushed the bowl even closer and held out the flatbreads to me. I said nothing and looked

past her. Then she turned to Sitt Marjam, but Sitt Marjam remained silent, as did I. Meanwhile, it had grown lighter, most of the camels had gotten up, and the first ones were already heading out of the camp to the pasture. Then Magbüla called out: “Yes, Djârid!” And then Djârid squatted beside her in front of my tent. I said: “The sight of you angers me, you traitor! Go!” - And he went. Now Magbüla began to say my name over and over again: “Yes, Muhammad Ferid! Yes, Muhammad Ferid!” Not flatteringly or pleadingly, but expressionlessly, almost tonelessly, with a small pause between each call and the next, but incessantly. I let them be undisturbed for a while, then I rose, took up my cloak, and turned to Sitt Marjam and said, “The sun will soon rise. It is high time for the morning prayers.” Magbüla exclaimed, “But you are starving!” I looked with satisfaction at the sacks stored in my tent, which contained various foods and an “iron ration” for more than a week, and said, “Hunger is better than the food of traitors.” With that, I took a jug of water and went outside the tent to perform ablution. Magbüla watched me for a while, then said, “You are not a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be as hard-hearted as you.” No one answered. Finally, she took her bowl and left.

After I had prayed, the area in front of my tent filled with men bristling with weapons. They squatted on the ground, and finally one of them said, “Peace be with you!” I said nothing. Then the speaker's voice rose again. It was a long speech, and its gist was: "Stay!" Meanwhile, the last camels left the camp. The sun rose and cast the shadows of the crouching men across the clearing in front of the tent, even into my tent. I spoke: "Your shadow touches me, but your words do not, for they are false like the games of the air on hot steppe days. You speak as if I were still your guest, as if I were free to leave or stay. If you had murdered me here in the camp, you would probably say: Honor us with your presence, do not leave us alone, stay! A dead man does not run away, nor does a prisoner.

[119] You have taken my mount, you have robbed me of my freedom, and now you mock me. "Get out of my sunlight!"

They said, "You are free and can travel whenever you want! We only ask that you stay." I felt anger rising in my throat, but I spoke calmly, "If it is true that I am free, then bring my horse, Dalül, saddled and ready to my tent. Then I will freely decide whether to go or stay!" For a while, there was silence, then they continued: the road to Amman was dangerous because of the raids of the Howeitât and a band of outlaws; I wouldn't make it through alive. And if something bad happened to me, it would be a disgrace to the Beni Sachr. I said, "Your disgrace cannot be increased any further. But if that is all you want, then you are free to guide me safely."

Deep down, I found it repugnant that I was still talking to them. I knew they were only talking to dilute their situation and mine with the torrent of words. I had wanted to remain silent and let them talk, and yet I had chattered on after all. By God, the role of the Oriental seemed to be seducing me; the "mimicry method" was eating away at my core. As if in a dream, I reached for my Mauser pistol and attached it to the shapely, hollow stock, while those outside were still talking to me. And it occurred to me to whom I owed this weapon: it was Ewald Banse, the geographer, poet, and connoisseur of the Orient, who had sent it to me when he learned that I was going to the nomadic tribes of northern Arabia. He thought, more than I did, about what was most needed there. It was his last weapon. And as I, with such thoughts, opened the pistol's chamber and one cartridge after another sprang into my lap, the face of Ewald Banse appeared before me, that Lower Saxon peasant face, in which the stamp of profound erudition is combined with a perpetually ready, mischievous, childlike laugh. And I spoke (but in German) to myself: "O Ewald Banse! O valiant friend, blue-eyed giant infant!" -

[120] It was as if the chatterers out there were moving further and further away from me, and I had to reflect on what I had to do with them. But they were still talking. So I leisurely slid the cartridges onto the stripper clip and spoke very loudly and clearly: "I'm loading. But once I'm loaded, I'll shoot. It's better to clear the area in front of my tent." Then I pushed nine cartridges into the chamber and the tenth into the barrel. I was curious to see what would happen next. They looked at each other, then got up and left. It didn't take long at all until the area was cleared.

I looked around for Sitt Marjam. She was laughing heartily. But after all, we couldn't stay sitting there forever. Eventually, the “iron ration” had to run out, and the water skin was already looking worryingly limp. The pasture was unusually rich: there had been plenty of rain here. A change of pasture wasn’t to be expected in the next few days. Of course, at some point they had to leave, and then they had to bring my dalul and the four pack camels. I wondered what they would do if I wanted to leave them then. Meanwhile, I devised various plans for my escape and had already begun to put them into action. The orators who had been sent away cautiously formed a circle around my tent from a distance; they stood there curiously, waiting to see what would happen. At some point, a festively dressed young man joined them, who seemed to have come from outside and now learned the state of affairs from them.

Finally, he broke away from their circle and came—a little hesitantly—towards me. It was Feidän, the son of Sheikh Guftån, who had solemnly invited me to "din" for the day.

He stopped at a distance of perhaps six paces. I pretended not to notice him. Then he came a little closer and solemnly said: "Peace be with you!" I looked at him and said, "And with you, peace!" and after a while, "And the mercy of God and his blessings." Then he came fully close and shook my hand, and we exchanged all the appropriate questions and greetings. Then he said, "My father and all the residents of the tent are waiting for you. Give us the honor, come with me."

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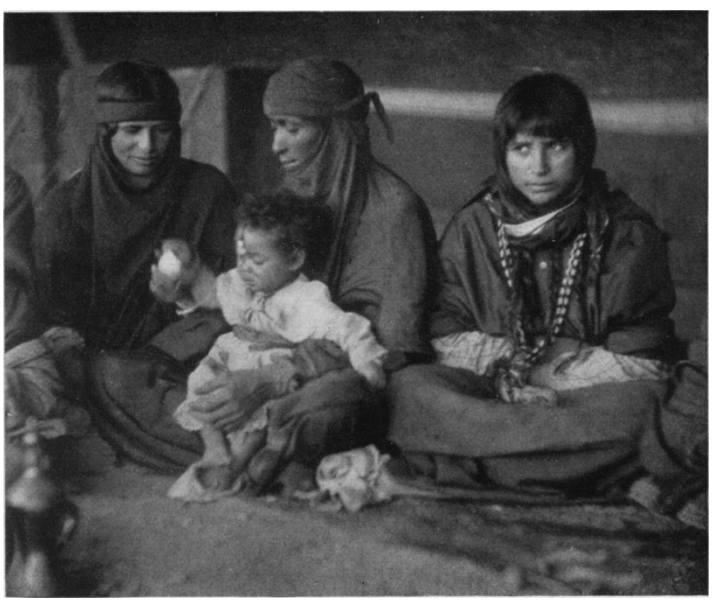

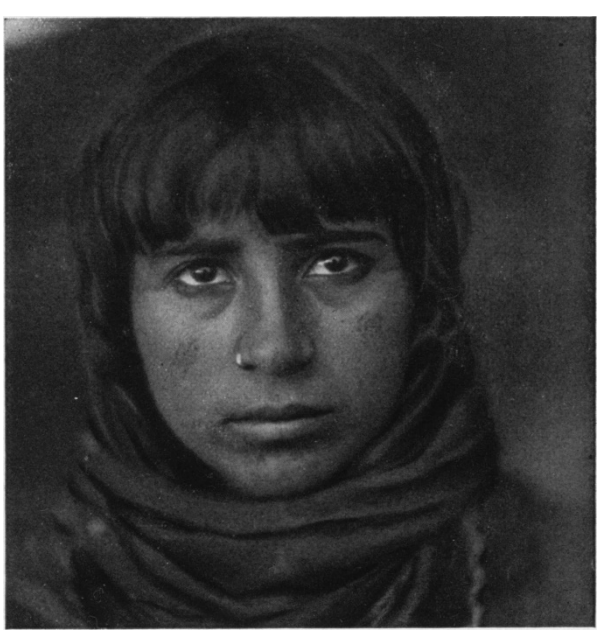

XXIX. (above): The hostile wives: left Sat'a, right Tarfa, between them the slave Hissa with her child (below): Tarfa

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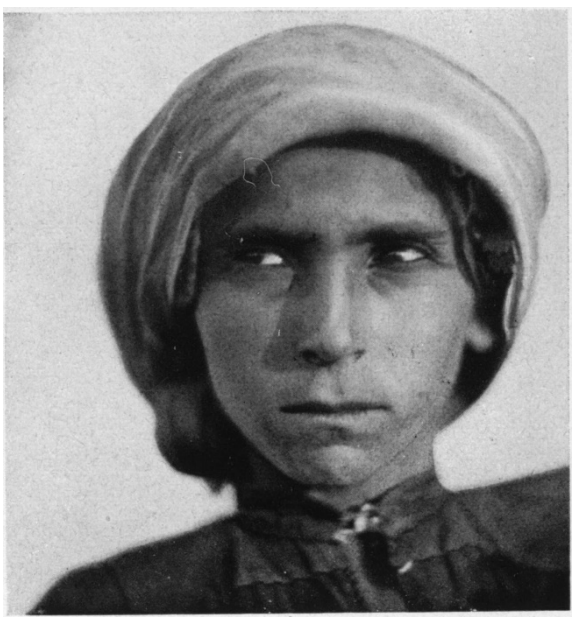

XXX. (above): Sat'a before her banishment (below): Bedouin girl (see p. 135)

[120]/3

XXXI. Ithreija in the litter, caressing her child on the camel's hump.

She guides the camel with a stick

[120]/4

XXXII. The Hopeless One: Ihreija, Sultan's elder wife

[121] Then I said, "Should I walk to your father's tent with my two feet? Look, your relatives have robbed me and are holding me captive. I was their guest, and they broke into my tent by night, then they took my cattle and my freedom. Truly, I am sorry that your father is waiting! But now is not the time for invitations."

He was still very young, Feidån, perhaps eighteen, and always a little embarrassed. Of all the Bedouin people I knew, he was the dearest to me. Now he just looked at me sadly and said, "Please come!" and then added: “We will help you.” This addition was important. Fortunately, I understood this quite soon. I remembered the Dachala, one of those chivalric rules that gives Bedouin communal life its great character and strength. The Dachala (“entering”) is the duty of protection that falls to every Bedouin as soon as someone in need of protection approaches

him using certain formulas. The duty of protection takes effect when the person in need of protection touches a Bedouin or a member of his clan (it could be a child, a little girl) and addresses him with the words: “ana dachilak!” i.e., “I am your ward!” (literally: “I am the one who enters into your presence”). The touch need not be direct; it is enough to touch the garment or even just the tent rope of the prospective protector, or to reach him by throwing a stone or spitting. In each of these cases, the person touched or struck is obligated to intervene with all their power and clan, even to the death, for the person they are protecting. This right of protection is granted even to complete strangers, and it applies even if the protector is a close relative of the persecutor. In the ordinary case, the persecutor ceases as soon as the Dachala comes into effect. Placing oneself under the protection of a powerful person is also customary even when not life, but only property or freedom is threatened. This, then, was my case.

I said to Feidan: “I hear you wish to protect me. Indeed, your father is a great sheikh among the sheikhs of the Beni Sachr. I will follow you into his tent—not as his guest, but as his Dachtl.” With that I washed my hands, took my weapons and the reddish-brown coat, asked Sitt Marjam to tie up the tent from the inside and to answer no one but myself, and walked with Feidån to his father's tent.

[122]

It was a half-hour walk, but neither of us spoke a word.

When I arrived at Sheikh Guftån's, I adopted as solemn a posture as possible, took his hand, and said, "Ana dachilak!" Guftån was not alone; several men I didn't know rose around him as I entered. They were close relatives. He himself was tall, broad-shouldered, calm, and composed in expression and gesture. There was something genuine and honest about him that inspired trust. When he questioned me, I told him what had happened to me in his cousin's camp. His first response was the same one every member of the tribe in question gives: "Dfabr? Harassment of a guest in the camp? Impossible! That simply doesn't happen. That would be a disgrace!" And I said, as always, "By God, it's a disgrace, and it really happened." First, he set before me a meal consisting of various delicious special dishes. These were meant only for me and truly prepared "with love." And while I ate them, he sat beside me and said several times, while repeatedly pushing the bowl towards me, "We want nothing more than for you to be well." He wouldn't tolerate anything left in the bowls. In Arabia, difficult guests are stuffed: the heavier the belly, the easier the negotiations afterward. This seemed to apply especially to him, because after my meal it was his turn, and he spared himself little. In the end, we solemnly agreed that I should break down my tent and move with all my belongings into his camp. My tent was to be pitched close to his. And "the day after tomorrow," I was to ride to Imam el-Amad on his best racing camel, and he and his men were to escort me. I said, "But tomorrow? Is that certain?" He looked away and said, "Insha'Allah!" (i.e., God willing). Now I knew that my stay wouldn't end so soon.

I wasn't too sorry about that, because I liked Guftån. His family wasn't bad either. They were trying to capture some camels to retrieve my tent and luggage.

[123] But when they finally had two, they ran off again. Camels are useless during the day: once they're out, they only return to camp together. Finally, someone had an idea: if all the tent dwellers went out themselves to fetch my luggage, they could manage it without camels. And so they raced each other: the young men with their wives, the boys, the girls, and the slaves—a good twenty men in all—roared off. I had to make sure I kept up. Only the older men and women stayed behind, among them Guftän and his stalwart tentmate.

Luckily, Sitt Marjam saw us coming and immediately understood what was about to happen. When we arrived, almost all the luggage was already tied up; otherwise, he would have been in serious trouble. For as soon as the horde of my protectors arrived, they stormed the tent, and everyone loaded something onto their back, the heaviest belonging to the women and girls. Even the smallest boys grabbed onto something and dragged it or pulled it behind them. I just had to hurry from one to the next, making sure nothing got lost or otherwise ruined. But everything went quite well, and I felt comfortable among these people. The time I spent with them from then on was the best part of my time as a Bedouin.

One evening, I saw a red dot over in the Pasha's camp and examined it with my binoculars. It was a red motor vehicle—probably the same one in which (how long ago had it been now?) Sultån had escaped against my orders. I went to Guftån and said, "If my eyes aren't deceiving me, Sultån has returned. I beg you, go and give him my greetings and let him know that I'm expecting him here if he wants to speak with me. But send the driver of the vehicle to me immediately." Guftån promised and went. I saw through my binoculars how he arrived on the other side. Soon the red car started moving. Guftän returned with it. Sultän didn't come. I quickly came to an agreement with the driver; he was planning to go to Ammån the next day anyway. He was to pick me up before daybreak.

[124] I distributed what I no longer needed among my protectors and prepared for my journey at the crack of dawn. When the wagon came again across the flint steppe and stopped before my belongings, it was immediately loaded and ready to depart. I was just about to give the signal to leave when a rider on a white dalül horse came trotting briskly toward us. It was Sultån. His eyes were red with fever, and his face was hollow and doomed. For a moment I hesitated: pity held me back, an undouin emotion. But I saw too clearly that the man was lost, and I didn't want to break my word, which I had given when he traveled to Amman. They would have taken it as weakness and repaid me badly. I raised my hand and said to the charioteer, “Go!”—and he drove.

Weeks later, I wrote a letter from Jerusalem to Mithgal, explaining the reasons for my departure and complaining about the withholding of my riding camel and the resulting deprivation of my freedom. I received a reply, dictated to his clerk. It stated that he would investigate the matter thoroughly and give me three of his best riding camels as compensation (I am still waiting for them); “but as for your friend Sultan, he has passed into the realm of mercy.”

18. Some Rules of Early Semitic Life

Among the resident Arabs, the inhabitants of the fertile land, the nomads of the Arabian steppes and deserts are considered robbers and murderers. How do the Bedouin themselves feel about this reputation?

A short story will illustrate this. Once, a Bedouin offered me a horse for sale, remarkably cheaply. I asked: My dear fellow, is this also lawfully acquired property? – “Lawfully, like my mother’s milk! I found it tied to a tree and the owner asleep beside it. So I woke him up, then I killed him, and then I took my property.” The focus of this speech lies in the sentence: “I woke him up.”

[125] For if he had not woken the sleeping man, but had killed him in his sleep, that would have been a disgrace according to the law of the Bedouin way of life and also a sin before God. But since he first awakened the sleeping man, his killing is an honest game, and the theft of his property a normal acquisition. What the robber took is, in his eyes, rightful property: "I killed the owner of the horse, and then I took my property." For at the very moment the robber killed the owner of the horse according to the rules of honest desert robbery, the horse, according to Bedouin legal sense, had already rightfully passed into the possession of the killer.

The Bedouin does not think of denying that he is a robber, nor even that he is a murderer. However, he only carries out robbery and murder according to established rules, according to a fixed "comment." The Bedouin does not act lawlessly, anarchically, or antisocially: there is an unwritten law of the steppe, and whoever violates it excludes himself from Bedouin society. Of course, in individual cases, the rule may often be broken without punishment, just as our own written laws are. But the rules should not be judged by their exceptions. The rule exists and is in force—more or less. Least of all in the vicinity of Western civilization.

All Bedouin life is governed by rules of this kind, and the researcher tasked with living among Bedouins must be thoroughly familiar with these rules. They must be vividly ingrained in his everyday experience, as something self-evident. I will give a few examples of such rules, starting with quite ordinary ones.

As a guest, one must not arrive at a camp tired and then expect to rest soon afterward. The Bedouin does receive a guest he knows or has recommended, as best he can, and protects him—if necessary, at the cost of his life. But he also wants something from him: not just gifts, but above all, entertainment. The guest's condition is of little concern to him, even though he asks about it a great deal verbally. He squeezes out the last bit of news from the newcomer.

[126]

To avoid it and feign tiredness would, according to Bedouin etiquette, be tantamount to skipping out on your bill.

Then: one rides up to the row of tents from the rear. Why? So as not to be seen as a stranger peering into the open women's tent. But where is the front and where is the back of a Bedouin tent? These "tents" are not round, nor are they gabled like our tents, nor are they made of canvas. They are rectangular huts made of long strips of thick, black goat-hair fabric, stretched over wooden poles with wide ropes. In summer, the wind is often allowed to pass through the huts by leaving open the two long sides of the rectangle. Only the women's section is almost always closed on the windward side (the side facing the wind) so that no one authorized can see inside. This closed side is the "back." Front and back thus change with the wind direction.

Another rule: for three days, and even longer until the first dew dries on the fourth day, the guest is entitled to hospitality. Then—after his departure—he remains under the protection of his host against the host's own tribesmen for another three and a third days. During this time, the host is liable for compensation if the guest is robbed on the

journey. After this period, the host himself may ambush and rob the former guest while he is on the march.

And then there is the important rule of Dachala, which we explained in the previous chapter. It is applicable even to someone who has systematically robbed another's camp at night and is caught in the act. If he manages to correctly utter the Dachala formula to a member of the robbed camp (except for the one holding him captive and his children), he becomes that member's Dachtl, is immediately treated as a guest, and is free. J. L. Burckhardt already described these rules, which seem highly strange to the settled Westerner, in his important "Remarks on the Bedouin and Wahabi" (Weimar 1831). He cites another rule there, which we have here - as a warning to incessant backpackers on foot who might want to go beyond the scope of their own rules into Arabia - communicated here by one of the most important experts on Arabia: “The Arabs never approach an enemy camp on foot or in small numbers other than when they are going out to rob.

[127] If they want to make an open attack, they come on horses or camels; and if their attack fails, they are regarded as honest enemies and not as robbers, namely they are stripped and plundered, but not captured. If, on the other hand, an Arab meets an unarmed enemy on foot, they are white He immediately says that he is a harâmi[1] who comes with the intention of robbing; and he therefore has the right to make him a rabid[2], provided that he captures him in a place from which it is still possible to bring him to his camp or to reach the tents of a friendly tribe with him. In this case the presumption is that the enemy had the intention of robbing the camp that night (3. L. Burckhardt a. op. p. 137.)

After all, almost every word of conversation is determined by the rules of the game. There are many measured greeting formulas, and for every formula there is one and only one counter-formula. There is a certain style of questioning that predetermines the possible form of the answer. A conversation with Arab people, especially with city dwellers, is never meant to be objective in our sense: it is a game according to fixed rules. Anyone who lives there has to listen to what the other person wants to hear, and this is what he has to tell him - not "objective truth".

Every race has its own, species-appropriate consciousness of truth that is only valid for it. The “objective” truth, as we revere it and use it as a standard, is an invention of the Nordic achiever. The Nordic person experiences his world as something that confronts him as his “object” (objectum) and that is there for him so that he can do something with it through design[3]. But the real Bedouin is not an achiever.

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[1] robber who does not rob in the form of raiding (razu).

[2] "Tethered": prisoner, prisoner.

[3] See L. F. Clauss, The Nordic Soul. 6th edition Munich 1937.

[128]

His world is not raw material for him to create, but a playground on which he is sent back and forth by the commands of his external fate - whether he calls this "God" or something else. From there it is determined what is true and what is not. Not just in big things, but also in the smallest ones. Life moves back and forth in a vast but firmly defined flight of changing pastures. What lies outside this world of steppes and deserts is foreign land for him and has nothing to do with the nomads. This is the world of the Sassen, the people of the fields and houses, where everything is “different”. You rob them when God gives you the opportunity, you buy from them when there is no other option - otherwise you stay as far away as possible. But the Bedouin honestly calls his robbery robbery - not cultivation or development and civilization, as today's achievers like to call their own ways of robbing foreign land. In this one point the Bedouin can even appear to be more objectively "true" than the essentially objective achiever. And he is proud to be a decent, chivalrous robber who knows the rules of the game and respects them.

This set of rules shapes the outside of Bedouin life. Community, even in the simplest sense, between Bedouin people and even between a stranger and Bedouins, would not be possible without these rules of the game. From the outside, the Bedouin “character” is built from them. Without her he would lose all stability. Seen from the inside, the real Bedouin is a person of “chance”. The way in which he experiences his world and relates to it we could call the style of coincidence. His life falls to him from moment to moment, and it often seems as if his moments have no connection whatsoever. The moment is, as it were, thrown to him from the hands of God, and the believer's task is to humbly grasp what is thrown to him - just as the beggar catches a penny from the hand of the giver. Everything that falls to man comes from God, and it is not man's business to examine what falls to him. Acquisition does not occur through purposeful achievement (that would be the Nordic style of acquisition), but through the correct grasp of the spoils bestowed by God.

[129] If a defenseless person crosses your path, God himself has thrown him to you as plunder, so: plunder him down to the shirt, no, down to the skin, and then let him go! - Pity? "He could wither away in the desert without clothing, water, or mount" -? Pity belongs to God! To interfere would be to be arrogant. Do not blaspheme God by refusing the plunder! If God wants to help the robbed, he throws him what he needs: clothing, water, camels.

All of the Bedouin's behavior toward his world is based on listening to the opportune moments, and all his acquisition is based on grazing, breeding, and plundering camels. To embrace chance is his greatest pleasure: through short forays and far-reaching raids that last for weeks, lead to distant regions, and then culminate in a sudden attack, in which the goods of the completely surprised victims fall prey. Beyond this, there is no shaping of the landscape for the Bedouin. The world that corresponds to the experience of this man of chance and surrounds him as his natural habitat is a world essentially unshaped by human hands, a world that cannot be shaped by Bedouin cultural means. It is a world in which camels can live as if in complete freedom: almost without any ordering intervention from humans. His camels are nomadic animals, not domesticated. They are not tamed but always remain semi-wild. Bedouins tell of how sometimes an entire herd reverts to its full freedom and escapes human control through sudden flight. Then a rider mounts a still-obedient racing camel, catches up with the fleeing camels, mingles with them, takes the lead, thus making his racer the lead camel of the fleeing herd, and finally leads the weary camels back to camp in a wide arc. There is a great difference between the farmer's camel and the nomad's camel. The latter lives as if it were free, in true nature, untouched by human hands; the former is a tame, domesticated creature, made by humans, which on marches often enough depends on provisions brought along.

How alien the Bedouin is to any idea of shaping his natural world is demonstrated, for example, by his attitude towards the most precious substance in the hot, dry steppes and deserts: water.

[130] Let us disregard the fact that far greater quantities of water would be accessible to a creative hand than what is readily available in winter puddles, holes, and rock crevices until it gradually disappears with the increasing summer heat. We are speaking here only of the nature of the water that is actually available to the Bedouin. This consists perhaps of at least half H_2O, but the rest is made up of additives of all kinds: primarily minerals, which turn it into a yellow to dark brown broth; then plant and animal additives, especially insect larvae, also human sweat (since they also bathe in it), and—let us not speak of anything else! This description is, of course, imbued with European sensibilities, which we must fundamentally disregard when assessing the situation. Unappetizing and unhealthy are qualities that do not exist in a Bedouin consciousness. From the Bedouin's perspective, things are as follows: the sediment in the cooking vessels forms a thick, sticky layer that is very bothersome to the women. When traveling, it unnecessarily fills the waterskin and burdens the pack animals. But it never occurred to a Bedouin to purify this water for use—not even by straining it through one or more cloths. Instead of using such a simple method, they pour the sediment away each time, allowing crusts to form, and burdening the water-carrying animals with dirt.

There is only one purpose for which water without these additives is necessary: washing hair. For its production, there is a natural filter, and that is that ubiquitous creature upon whose existence all Bedouin life is founded: the camel. For hair tonic, the women in particular use the fresh urine of female camels. It is essentially water filtered through organic processes and contains additives from the camel's metabolism which, according to Bedouin women, are particularly beneficial for the hair. They give the hair a reddish tint and a tart scent, like bitter herbs.

[131]

19. Work Without Achievement

The Bedouin "complete human being" feels like a master and does not work. Achievement—the highest of all values in the world of Nordic people—means no value to him. Work, insofar as it is absolutely unavoidable—household chores, dismantling and rebuilding the camp, fetching water from the always distant water sources—is therefore only performed by those who, according to Bedouin concepts, are not "complete human beings": slaves and women. Both are considered "property" according to Arab beliefs. The daughters of free Arabs are indeed called "free women," but—well, more on that in our next chapter. From the perspective of the lives of slaves and women, Bedouin life is not entirely devoid of work. In the "lowlands" of life, there is a workday with a fixed routine. It is important for us to take a closer look at the course of a work morning.

Even before dawn, one can hear the sleepy voice of the tent mother. She senses the coming morning and calls her daughter, who is still a little girl of perhaps six years old. Tonelessly, but incessantly, she speaks the name: "Yes Hmejde! Yes Hmejde! Yes Hmejde...!" until finally the little girl awakens. She staggers to her feet, staggers out, and drags her long,

dark blue shirt behind her. Sleepily, she adjusts it, gathers it up to gird herself, and lets the folds fall over her belt to below her knees. The hem still falls to her ankles. The little girl brings dried camel dung and dry brushwood, both for fuel. Meanwhile, a slave woman stretches herself up and stokes the utility fire in the women's tent. If possible, she remains squatting where she was lying before: getting up would be an enormous effort. In her time, the tent mother also comes up, checks and tightens the tent pegs, and straightens the ropes.

Gradually, it grows lighter. Through the wide entrance of the tent, the bodies of the encamped camels appear like clumps of mist. After a while, the voice of the tent master can be heard from the men's side of the tent. He calls out to ZeifAllah, one of his sons: “Yes, ZeifAllah! Yes, ZeifAllah! Yes, ZeifAllah...!” - tonelessly, but incessantly.

[132] The tent master remains lying down, the summoned boy gradually gets up, grasps the large copper frying pan by its long handle, and goes out to the camels. One or two of them have risen and are standing on three legs (one front leg is tied at the knee during the night). The young Zeff=Allah approaches a female camel that has just risen and catches her fresh urine in the frying pan. Then he goes to the next and on, until he can only hold the pan with difficulty using both hands. Now he takes it to the women's quarters and carefully places it on the ground. The women throw their wooden combs into the urine, undo their braids—only one at first—bend their parted heads over the pan, scoop up the bitter-smelling urine with their cupped hands, and pour it over their loose hair. Then the hair is carefully braided again on one side, and afterward the other braid is undone and... Soaked in camel urine. This hair washing is also supposed to kill lice, but I have reason to doubt its effectiveness.

Meanwhile, there's a stir in the men's quarters. One of them has lit a fire and is roasting green coffee beans on it, an excellent variety of Yemeni coffee. (The best coffee comes from Yemen. Mocha, which gave its name to "Mocha," is also located there.) Then he throws them onto a cooling plate and from there into the mortar. In it, he grinds them into powder and then laboriously brews the beverage in three different brass pots of varying sizes, each with a different purpose and contents. These three coffee pots are the heart and sanctuary of the Bedouin household. The roasting, grinding, brewing, flavoring, mixing, and distributing of the coffee is always done by men for the men, and when there are guests, in their presence, and usually by the tent owner himself. Otherwise, it's done by one of his sons or a favored slave. It is an honorary position, the performance of which is not perceived as work, but as a celebratory game and occasion for the exchange of honors: comparable to the "presidium" at the former pub tables of German students.

[133] This early morning coffee is enjoyed while still in the position in which the sleepers awoke. They are so accustomed to this stimulant that some of them cannot fully awaken before enjoying a few cups of this very strong, unsweetened beverage. Often, men came to me and asked for a tonic: their strength was "completely shattered." This is the nerve-destroying effect of this constant consumption of the strongest coffee brew: without caffeine, there is no longer any motivation for any action. The coffee is always consumed without any food or drink. Finally, one of the coffee drinkers gets up and looks over the carpeted wall that separates the men's room from the women's room to see if there will soon be something to nibble on. The scent of fresh bread has reached his nose. In the women's room, one of the young women is now baking fresh bread over the communal fire, pouring thin dough onto a hot, convex iron plate: so skillfully and so nimbly that hardly a drop ever spills over the edge. This is how round, almost paper-thin flatbreads are made. They are taken to the men's quarters, along with fresh, frothy camel milk. It is passed around in a wooden bowl. The thin flatbreads are often placed over the arm or on the knee like face cloths, and occasionally used to wipe the mouth and hands. They are still hot and crispy at the edges. For now, however, only the men enjoy this. The young women and little girls get nothing for a long time. They must constantly tend the fire.

Meanwhile, the camels have all risen. They can be seen standing in groups: here white ones, there brown ones, here stallions, there young mares, and there mothers with their foals. And in groups, they then leisurely leave the camp, heading towards their pasture, while the sun rises and paints the outlines of the animals—with their high humps and long, curved necks—in strangely distorted shadows on the flint floor. The gravel glitters and dazzles between the shadows. The shepherds' drawn-out calls linger over the landscape for a while, then fade away. The sun rises, and the camp becomes still and lifeless.

[134]

20. The Fate of an Arab Woman

This is the typical life course of a Bedouin woman:

After birth, she remains at her mother's breast for one to two years. Her life revolves around suckling, crying, and kissing: warm physical closeness, tender bliss—the only melancholy in her life. As soon as she cries, the breast is offered: to let a breastfed child cry would be inhumane. Mother and child play together like kittens (only the crust of

dirt is not licked off the child, as it serves as protection against the evil eye). But as soon as the little girl begins to crawl and stand upright, she loses more and more of her value as a cute toy for her mother. Now she begins to push the little one away. She is always in the way and, if she is lucky, is placed on the back of an older sister of six to ten years old. She can then see how she manages her. Until her third year, however, and sometimes even longer, she still returns to her mother's breast often enough. Then, however, the warm physical closeness between mother and child completely dissolves, and the little girl is as if cast out by her mother and by everyone. The "big sister," on whom she becomes a burden, stuffs her crying with begged scraps, yet envies her charge every single bite she manages to cram into her eternally greedy mouth.

And suddenly, the little girl herself becomes the "big sister," tending, carrying, stuffing, and envying her little sisters and—what is even worse! —her little brothers, those squealing tormentors. This is the hardest time in the girl's life. Now, before the first light of dawn, she is tormented from her slumber by her half-asleep mother's toneless calls, until, disoriented and groaning, she staggers out of the tent to gather fuel for the campfire. This is the time when an expression like that of much-beaten, vicious animals becomes fixed on the child's little face - the time when the child must steal moments to play and must still beware of the stone.

[135] This is the time when an expression like that of much-beaten, vicious animals takes hold in the child's face - the time when the child must steal moments to play and must still beware of the stone-throwing of unruly boys, even the smallest ones, even their own charges. This is the time when her youth is stolen[1].

Around her eleventh or twelfth year, when she begins to become marriageable, her lot improves. Now it is remembered that she is a commodity for which the highest possible price is desired. The price for a healthy girl from a respected family, for example, among the Beni Sachr in northern Arabia, averages five camels worth about 2,000 marks. The marriageable girl is spared, because the future buyer values a vibrant appearance.

When she is married young, she once again enjoys the happiness of physical intimacy, but this time clouded by constant anxiety about her husband's affection. The experience of her marriage (if one can call it that) is completely enveloped by the awareness of being a purchased, legitimate possession of her husband. In very young marriages, if the husband is deeply in love, this awareness can recede, so that it appears as if two young people are standing together with equal rights. This lasts as long as the husband is nothing more than a big boy who essentially longs for a mother's hand and is still completely shaken by his entry into the world of sexual experience. But once marriage has become customary, the man is the owner and the woman his property. There is no shortage of family strife in the nomadic tents, but never marital tragedies in the truest sense of the word. Tragedy is only possible in a marriage where both partners live according to their own rules. This is not possible in any Arab marriage today.

In the following, we outline some types of Bedouin wives. There is the childlike, dreamy woman who, despite the terrible years when she was pushed around and then abused as the "big sister" of little tormentors and by the adults in the household, never allowed her pious grace to be disturbed. She has an extremely slender body and large, dark, wide-open, strongly shining eyes - the real eyes of the desert race.

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[1] Plate XXX (bottom image).

[136]

You can already tell from the vibrating sound of her voice how stunned she is by the unexpected miracle of being loved tenderly. But this condition usually doesn't last long. When her husband's love wanes, without which she can no longer live, she dies internally and ends in a kind of spiritual blindness, which appears as hopeless dullness to those who do not know her fate.

Another type of woman can then take her place as the wife of the same tent master: the sober, contented woman who adapts herself to her husband's whims in cold calculation in order to preserve his inclinations for as long as possible by being dispensable. In those cases that I have encountered, it is lighter in color and has a sharper outline, sharper than the pure form of the desert race can tolerate. Any disagreements that arise are artificially laughed away. Deep down you dread the loss of the peace you have laughed at. Secretly, she is always on her guard and therefore lasts quite a long time[1].

The most common type is probably the grumpy, broken woman who can no longer find her way out of the constant fear of her final years as a girl and no longer knows how to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by marriage. She walks around as if she were carrying a burden. Her face soon forms drooping wrinkles, and even her strong nose does not appear curved, but rather heavy. You never see her laugh, except in glee. Although she occurs frequently among Bedouin women, she does

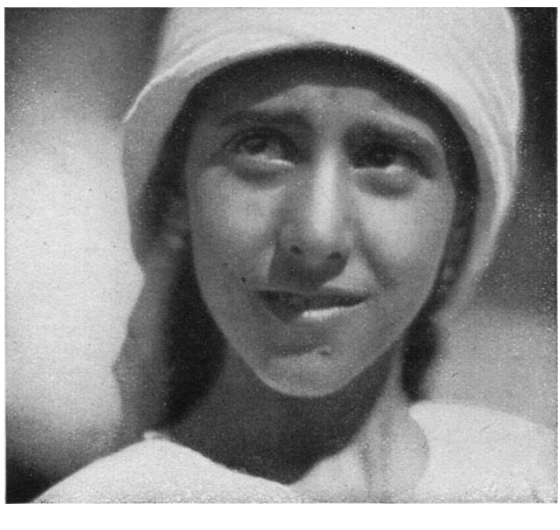
not belong to the type of person who is suitable for Bedouin life. She is destined to sink most quickly into the state to which sooner or later almost every Bedouin wife falls as soon as her husband acquires a new, younger wife: the state of neglect or even rejection[2].

One could also place various other types of women alongside her: Tarfa, the sneak, who, despite all her scheming, is always afraid of her own stupidity.

[1] Cafel XXIII.

[2] plates XXXI and XXXII.

[136]/1



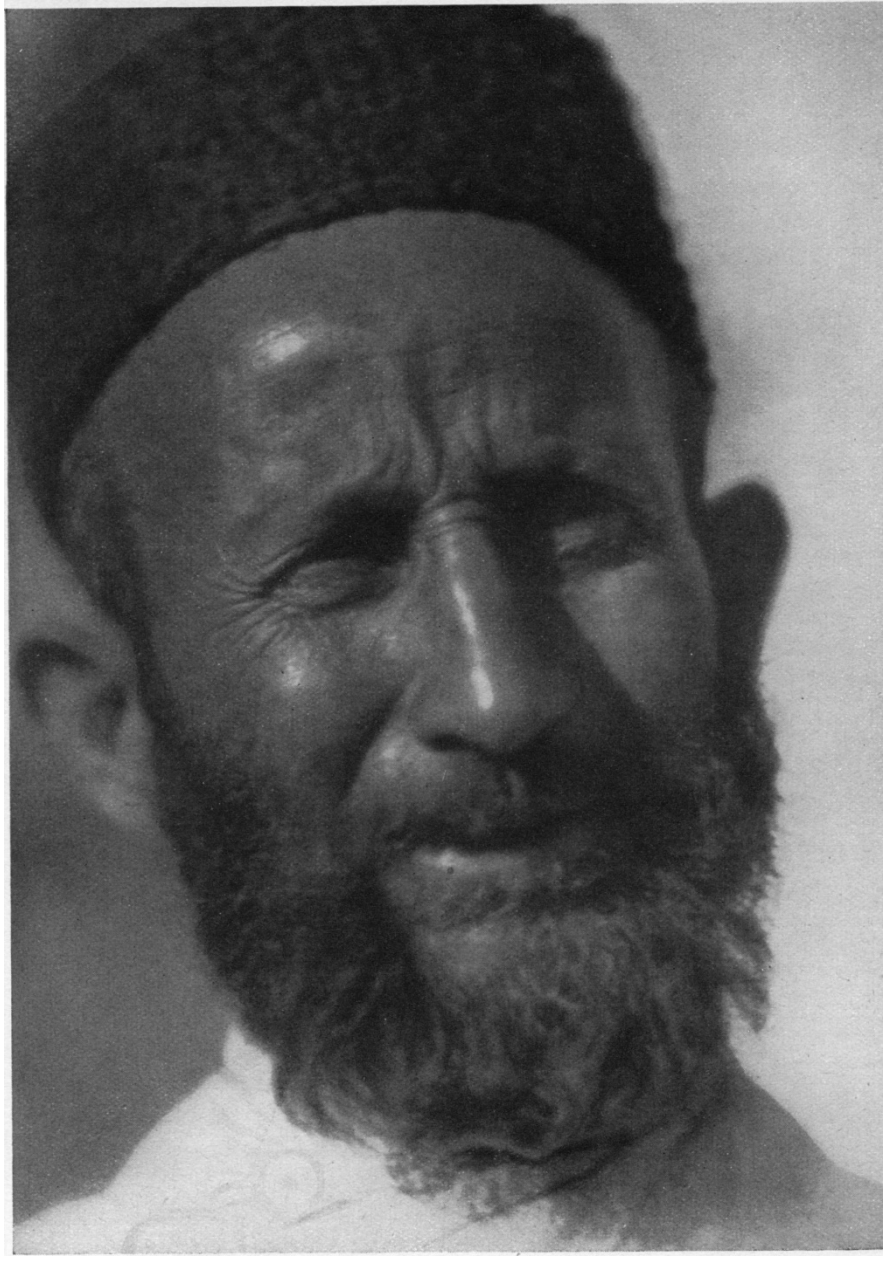
XXXIII. Faces of desert races with the characteristic expression of shyness and elusiveness. Above: Bedouin. Below: Jewish girl from Jerusalem (see p. 143)

[136]/2

XXXIV (above): Sheikh Khalid. His eyes glow. Desert expression.

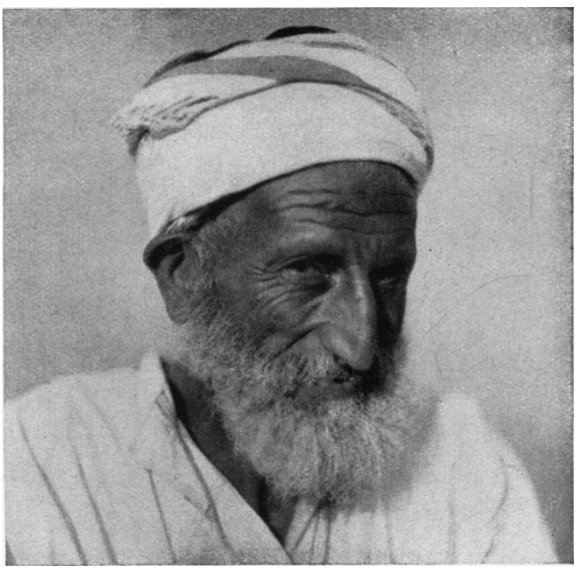
(below): Bedouin poet and Yemeni Jewish girl (see p. 147)

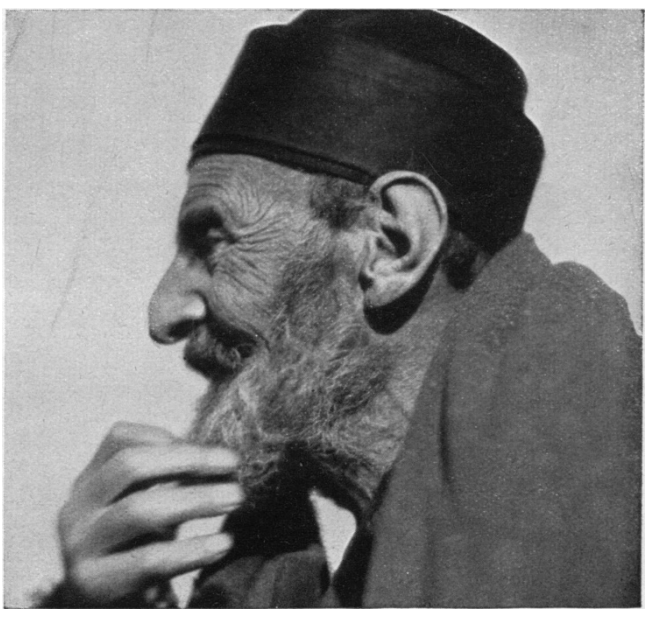
[136]/3



XXXV. Jew from Bukhara with essential features of the Hither Asiatic race. Butcher (ritual slaughterer). Craftsmanship here is based on astute knowledge (see p. 151)

[136]/4





XXXVI. (above): Arab villager (Felläch) with Hither Asiatic and desert features.

(below): Jew from Aleppo, essentially Hither Asiatic. Someone says to him: You are a great scholar (see p. 152).

[137] We depicted her in our chapters "Sat'a's Expulsion," "The Love Potion," and "To the Camels!" and show her on Plate XXIX (lower image and upper right image). On the same image, and on Plates XIX, XX, and XXX (upper image), we also find Sat'a, her antagonist. She hates her husband from the very beginning: she hates him as the enemy of her clan, to whom she was paid as a price and sign of reconciliation, and she hates him as her oppressor and tyrant. All the "love" she is capable of showing him is, in essence, nothing but fear and inverted hatred. She could, by nature, have become a woman of greater emotional depth. But she cannot break free from the iron constraints of the communal form in which she is bound, and so, from her girlhood onward, all her

experiences must freeze in silent rebellion, relieved from time to time by a fruitless outburst of her abused passions.

Of the several wives of a prominent Bedouin, at least one is always ostracized, without being definitively driven away. The fate of such a rejected woman is perhaps the most desolate imaginable. Since she will never again win her husband's affections, she has nothing left to hope for. Our Plate XXXII offers a glimpse into such a woman's face, beyond all hope. Nor can she escape, or escape would be tantamount to suicide: she would thereby place herself outside the Bedouin communal order and become without rights and protection, like a prey animal. Unless a stranger attempts to forcibly tear her from her tribe and transplant her to foreign territory—and when would that ever happen!—she has no choice but to remain and be treated like air until her death. This kind of hopeless ostracism is a typical fate for women on the Arabian steppe. Once, such a woman came to my tent at night and begged me to take her away. Any other fate seemed more bearable and hopeful to her than that of her ostracism.

Despite all this, anyone who is accustomed to the life of Arab city dwellers will first notice the freedom of the Bedouin women when they come out to the nomads of the steppe.

[138] The city woman walks in the street double-veiled and is invisible to male guests in the house. If one is visiting a city manor, and no servants are present at the moment, the wife pushes the coffee tray through the door on the floor, but she herself remains completely hidden. If the man then offers cigarettes and calls out, "Matches!", they fly through the air, thrown by an invisible hand. The Bedouin woman, on the other hand, walks with her face unveiled, at least in northern Arabia. Only when a complete stranger approaches the women's tent does she turn away or cover her mouth and nose with her head covering or the long train of her sleeve. Only her eyes remain uncovered.

The Bedouin bride is sold like the city woman, but usually not entirely against her will and not willingly to someone she knows. The right of first refusal belongs to the son of her father's uncle. He can relinquish this prerogative in favor of another suitor, but then has the right to demand a "settlement sum." In any case, the girl knows her suitor before the wedding. Thus, bridal love is possible in Bedouin life, but not in urban life. The urban groom does not see his bride before the wedding night. She is chosen for him by his mother or some other older relative: he literally buys a pig in a poke. No one can think about these matters more superficially and less romantically than the Arab city dwellers, these Efendis dressed in European style except for their red fezzes, and the veiled harem women: there is no trace left of One Thousand and One Nights. (See Table VIII.) Although—or perhaps precisely because—the betrothed live almost constantly in a state of vague irritation, they intellectually despise any action that stems not from sober calculation but from "love." Love, they say, is "the business of donkeys, who bray and chase after mares in lust." And they are quite right to despise what they call "love."

In the Arab city, love – premarital attraction to a single, special woman – could only arise through a violation of the custom of the woman's visibility: through a stolen glimpse into an unveiled face.

[139] That is why, for the Arab city dweller, love always has something of theft about it. The Bedouin, on the other hand, woos his beloved earnestly: not only with a sum of money and not only with her father, but also with her directly. He does not woo her possessions, but her affection. On the steppe, wooing is done with dazzling gifts. Often a loving young man asked me for some glittering object for his chosen one. Such gifts are brought to the beloved during a nighttime tryst. This, however, is done in strict secrecy: if it is secret, it is legitimate custom; if it comes to light, it is shameful. The girl, if possible, refuses sexual intercourse, for its premarital consequences would reveal everything, would devalue her, and would be her death.

Of course, if one measures the freedom of the Bedouin woman by Western standards, it shrinks considerably. A woman who – like Khadija, the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad – was an independent entrepreneur with far-reaching business dealings is unthinkable in modern Arab life. Perhaps, historically speaking, one can speak of remnants of female freedom among the Bedouin, for things must once have been different. In the first golden age of Islam, there was "Minnesang" in Arab society (before Western Minnesang), which meant the free singing of praise to beloved women, even or especially when the women being sung about were the wives of other men, particularly men of high social standing. Compare this: in today's urban life among Arabs, it would be a grave offense to even ask the master of the house how his wife is doing during a visit. The wife is not only invisible to the stranger, but practically non-existent. Even asking about her well-being would be an unauthorized intrusion, a grasping at the master's property. But a Bedouin, too, would consider praise of his wife from a guest unseemly and would become suspicious—a suspicion that quickly escalates into jealousy and hostile actions.

[140] Historically speaking, the freedom of Arab women certainly originated in urban life and from there spread more and more "into the

countryside," that is, to the nomads of the steppe. Tribal chiefs, in particular, often had urban wives in urban homes and there became acquainted with urban customs, which sometimes seemed all the more worthy of emulation the more they facilitated male arbitrariness.

21. The Semitic Person

The word "Semitic," as already mentioned (see p. 27), is not an organically grown word, but a term coined by European scholarship, initially intended to denote a group of similar, related languages. Only from this did the term "Semites" derive, referring to the speakers of these languages. We will need to examine the distinctive features of these languages in order to then ask: What is distinctive about the nature of that human race that produced these languages as an expression of its essence?

One of the distinguishing features of these Semitic languages is their way of constructing a single word from three consonants: these alone belong to the word itself, but cannot be pronounced on their own; they require the addition of vowels. The vowels, however, do not belong to the word itself, but are grammatical markers. To grasp a word as an independent entity and stand it on its own, as one can do with any Germanic word, is therefore impossible in the realm of Semitic language formation: where a word appears as a finished construct, it is no longer "on its own," but is permeated by the framework of grammar.

After my time with the Bedouin, I stayed for a while longer in my workshop near Jerusalem and had Muhammadise and, if necessary, her husband take care of the house for me until the very end (see p. 39 and Plate XII).

[141] One day I broke off my work and decided to return home to Germany. I prepared the two of them for this: a time would come when I would be away and remain away for a long time; then they should find other lodgings, for I was returning to my country. The fellahin woman thought they would, of course, come with me—along with the child she was carrying in her arms. I said, “The country is too far away for you, and you don’t understand its language.” Then the woman said, “You have learned our language; we will learn yours as well.” I said, “Very well, we will begin right away. What you are carrying in your arms is called a ‘child’ in our language. That’s what we say when there is only one. Now imagine, though, that there are three or four.” “What do you think people will say then?” And now she began to treat the word “kind,” which—like a Semitic word—has three consonants, in a Semitic way. She offered me almost all the plural forms familiar to her Arabic dialect: iknâd, kunûd, úknud, aknåd, kanâdi, etc. She considered only the three consonants k, n, d to be part of the word “kind”; the vowel sound i, and the way it is inserted between the consonants, she could only understand as a grammatical sign of the singular, and she replaced both with plural signs. The idea that the vowel i belongs to the core of the word is alien to her Semitic understanding of language: the concept of the “core” of a word is incomprehensible to Semitic consciousness, or else the core is a construct that is not tangible in itself, as if it cannot stand on its own. To bring: something fleeting, something that seeks to elude all grasp.

This is only one side of the story. We will limit ourselves to this one here. Language is the expression of a kind, namely the kind of the speakers of that language. But not everyone who has merely learned this language can be considered a speaker in the strict sense, even if they were born into it. If a Black person grows up among Germans and learns to use the German language effortlessly, one cannot say that the German language is now the natural expression of their Black nature.

[142] This Black person, like countless American and, more recently, French Black people, may never learn the language that is an expression of his soul: he will not learn it because he has lost the connection to his fellow Black people, among whom the language of his race still lives. The same applies if a Black person is born into a Semitic language: it cannot be considered "his" language in the strict sense, because the creators and speakers of the Semitic languages were not of Black origin. While the Arabic-speaking peoples have absorbed much Black blood throughout their history and count many pure or nearly pure Black people among them—not only as slaves—these Black people speak Arabic, a Semitic language. Nevertheless, Black people cannot be considered speakers of Arabic. The same applies to a number of other races that are mixed into the Arabic-speaking peoples.

When we consider the form of the Arabic language, a still fully-fledged Semitic language, and compare it with the spiritual character of those various races mixed in the Arab peoples, we find among these races only one that speaks Arabic as the natural expression of its being. Only this one can be considered the creator and true speaker—the true speaker—of this language. It is a race whose spiritual lineage combines rigidity and transience in a way for which our entirely different language lacks a characteristic expression. But what our linguistic tools cannot grasp, we can nevertheless grasp with other tools. Our Plates XXXIII and XXXIV show a series of images that, in the structure of physical appearance and

in the play of expression, clearly reveal the lineage by which the life and experience of this race are determined. The upper image on Plate XXXIII shows a Bedouin as he is “suddenly there.” This is not meant only spatially, but concerns the onset of his consciousness. For example, in their interactions with other people. But even in broader spatial terms, it is in the nature of these people to be "suddenly there" and just as suddenly disappear.

[143] However, the rules of their way of life may otherwise be rigid, greetings are fleeting, and they do not know farewells.[1] Lighting up and going out is the movement of their consciousness. Our images in Plate XXXIII depict such a flashing in fleeting existence in two people of different nationalities and very different societies, but of the same race: while the upper image shows a young Bedouin from the Dead Sea region, the other image shows a Jewish girl of Eastern European (Ashkenazi) origin living in Palestine. We could describe the expression of this image with the word "shy," and would certainly be saying something accurate, but by no means everything: we would still not grasp the racial trait in this girlish shyness. One can be shy, especially as a girl, in the style of other races besides this one, for example, in the Nordic way. But the shyness that speaks from our two images is different from Nordic shyness: its essence lies in this sudden flashing, which in itself already carries the readiness for sudden extinguishing.

The life of the Nordic people has both direction and distance. The life of this type of person is momentary. Anything that reaches into the distance, longing or worry, is utterly unbearable to them: a fervent desire that is not fulfilled in the moment acts like a fatal illness. These people "die when they love"—or they believe they are dying. The idea of planning and building life as something that desires permanence and lasting power, or of carrying life out into the distant future—such a thought is life-suffocating and blasphemous here. "They neither sow nor reap," but they graze and move on. Life falls to them from moment to moment like morsels from the hand of their God.

Plate XXXIV (top image) shows the young Sheikh Khalid of the Beni Sakhr tribe. (See p. 102 and Plate XVII.) I never saw this man laugh, and in that he differed from most people of his race with whom I associated.

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[1] This applies to Bedouins, not to the urban Arab. Arab urban life is significantly influenced by the style of other races: it clearly shows that tendency towards complexity which originates from another race - the Hither Asiatic one.

[144]

In all racial traits of his mental and physical form, he entirely resembles the racial image that also gazes back at us from Plate XXXIII; the race is the same as there, but the person is different. The word persona may be used here in its most original sense: the mask, the face for the observer. In this case, I am the observer of Khalid. The young sheikh wants to force me to adopt a very specific understanding of his character, which, in truth, represents only one aspect of his being. This one aspect, which he considers the only significant one, I am to take for the whole. He fears a diminishment of his worth in my eyes if I were to look behind this mask. For him, I was a "great man" who came from afar, behind whom stood a world and perhaps a power that was not yet known; it was important to show me that I, too, was one of the great ones. While the Bedouin usually surrounded me very quickly with their everyday manner, as if I were one of their own, since I always presented myself as one of them, Khalid stubbornly clung to his mask. He was, as it were, putting on a "Bedouin show for strangers." It is the rigid, "darkly glowing" face that all pictures of distinguished Bedouin often show, sometimes to the point of extreme distortion, insofar as such pictures were taken by Western travelers. Herein lies the source of the richest misunderstanding of these people of the Arabian steppe. Although J. L. Burckhardt—one of the few true experts on Bedouin life—already pointed to this source when he wrote: “The Arab is by no means the silent creature that some travelers describe; rather, I have found in the Arab a cheerful companion… I have, however, had frequent opportunities to convince myself of the truth of an observation, namely that the Bedouin appears quite different in a city than in the desert. It is well known that the city dwellers, whom he despises, have foolish views of his people, and therefore he endeavors to impress them by adopting an expression of silent keenness and firm resolve. The expressions he uses are designed to demonstrate the changeability of his opinions.

[145] But this character, which he adopts to further his business dealings, he sets aside with his retreat into the desert.[1]” These simple remarks by Burckhardt, which—although written more than a hundred years ago—already clearly distinguish between racial traits and the “assumed character” of a person, have unfortunately received little attention until now.

That “darkly glowing” rigidity that occasionally appears on the Arab countenance serves this type of person as a vessel for the fleeting nature of their soul. What Plate XXXIII reveals can also be found behind the face of the young Sheikh Khalid, if one does not seek the essence of

the man in his mask. What we grasp here with the word "fleeting" can manifest itself in very different qualities and "moods" of the soul: in cheerfulness, or in shyness, or otherwise. On Plate XXXIII, upper image, it appears as cheerfulness; on the lower image, as shyness; and in Khalid's work, as the apparent opposite of both: as the somber ardor and unerring greed of a relentless predator. One can be cheerful and shy, somber, greedy, and relentless in a Nordic, Mediterranean, Hither Asiatic, or any other racial way; cheerfulness and shyness, as well as a somber nature, greed, and relentlessness, are qualities, not racial traits: they do not have much to do with race. The Bedouin on Plate XXXIII is essentially cheerful; Sheikh Khalid—at least in our images—is not essentially so, but the (original) cheerfulness of the former and the (displayed) somber ardor of the latter The second group exhibits the same style, the same racial trait. This is what matters when we conduct research into racial psychology. It cannot be denied that such distinctions are sometimes difficult and therefore unpopular, but they are indispensable for anyone who truly wants to grasp the racial characteristics of the soul and not merely seize upon a jumble of arbitrary traits.

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[1] J. L. Burckhardt, Remarks on the Bedouin and Wahabi. Weimar 1831. p. 150.

[146]

The Nordic person lives "opposite" the world and experiences it as their object, which they grasp objectively in order to accomplish something with it. They also conceive of themselves as part of this material world and are therefore able to confront themselves and accomplish something within themselves, as if they were a thing. Self-mastery is possible in the Nordic way as a free achievement of one's own self. Such an attitude is impossible and incomprehensible to the people depicted in our pictures. Just as their lives fall to them from moment to moment as prey, as a morsel of God, so too do they themselves fall prey to the moment. Self-mastery in the true sense—that a person confronts himself and holds himself in check—all of this is utterly meaningless here. The moment "falls" and then assaults the soul, which is completely at its mercy unless a rigid framework, an artificial shell, holds it. Therefore, a rigid framework pervades all of Arab life as a set of rules that no one can violate without excluding themselves from the community. It encompasses and conceals this life in the form of roles and masks that are something other than this life itself, or perhaps merely a rigidity on the outside of this life. When a person of this kind seems to control "themselves," it is not they who control themselves, but rather this rigid framework that simultaneously holds, supports, and compels them. Without it, their lives would dissipate. This rigidity, therefore, is the very shell of this transience.

"Life as Prey"—this could be the motto for describing the natural life of these people. The word "prey," however, is to be understood in such a broad sense that it encompasses more than just the fruits of the Bedouin raid. Not only the Bedouin way of life, but also the entire society, which is determined by the characteristics of this race, ultimately has this meaning.[1]

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[1] The word "characteristics," as used in racial psychology, refers to a totality of traits, all governed by the same lines, determined by one and the same fundamental law of form. (See L. F. Clauß, Race and Character, Vol. I: The Living Face. Frankfurt a. M. 1936.) The word is formed from the word "Zug" (train) as "Gebirge" (mountain) is from "Berg" (mountain).

[147]

Peasantry – in the Germanic sense as we understand it – is the most alien counterpart to everything that has ever emerged in terms of civilization from this race. Germanic peasantry is bound to the land in such a way that it increases the land's productivity through its own labor. Both the peasant and his land create one another. The peasant treats the land as something from which he demands output and to which he helps to produce. But the land also demands of the peasant that he cultivate it: the land demands output. "Life as output"—this is the overarching principle of all Germanic life. What constitutes the meaning of life for the Germanic man means expulsion from paradise for the Arsemite.

"Booty," we say, is not to be understood here merely as the fruit of a Bedouin raid, but in a broad sense that extends into all aspects of this race's life. We see a man of this kind on Plate XXXIV, lower left; He is indeed a Bedouin like the previous one, but at the moment this photograph was taken, he was not engaged in robbery in the usual sense. He had previously recited a prize poem in which he celebrated me as the great "Sheikh of the Germans"; for this, I gave him a gift, along with abundant praise for his poetry and friendly attention. This praise and attention from "one of the greats" means more to him than any material gift: it is a piece of God's bounty that falls to him and which he

now catches with closed eyes. The expression in our picture shows how this man experiences his moment—a supreme moment in his sphere of experience: he retreats with his prize to a protected corner of his soul, just as a predator secures its snatched morsel. The last picture on this panel (bottom right) shows something quite similar. A girl who—apart from a slight Black influence—clearly embodies the character of this race, here enjoys a supreme moment: to be noticed and honored. The distinction this time lay in the photograph itself, which this girl was presumably aware was being taken. (Almost all the people shown so far were photographed without their knowledge.)

[148] But this girl is not a Bedouin daughter, but comes from a South Arabian ghetto: she is a Yemeni Jew. The society to which she belongs and the spirit in which she was raised are entirely non-Douin; but her blood is the same as there, and with it her spiritual makeup. The highest moment is captured like a penny from God falling from above and then dragged into the inner cave.

In such a life, "prey" becomes the least and the most sublime. In the realm of faith, it is called "miracle" and—capturable, of course, only for the chosen—"revelation." Revelation, too, "falls through the grace" of God.

Revelation, it seems, is the highest value in the sphere of value for this type of person; therefore, we call them the revelatory human being. Revelation appears here as the noblest prey. If we were to call the Nordic man—after the highest value in his sphere of values—the achiever, then only that name is appropriate for the race of the Arsemite. But if the Nordic man is named after the landscape of the North, then we must name the man of revelation after that landscape which represents the stylistically appropriate environment for his spiritual development. This is the vast landscape of the Arabian steppes, crisscrossed by deserts like the mainland by seas, and which we therefore call "desert land." Thus, the designation "desert-land race"[1] is given to the man of revelation.

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[1] "Desert-land" is not meant to imply that these people lived in the desert, for humans can no more live permanently in the desert than on the sea. Similarly, the term "Mediterranean" (Mediterranean, Mediterranean) race does not mean that these people lived in or on the Mediterranean Sea, but rather in the countries that border it. The term "Oriental race" is also used for the desert-dwelling race, a term necessarily rejected by anyone who knows the Orient from anything other than package tours. The term "Oriental languages" can at least be objectively justified; likewise, one could speak of Oriental races (in the plural), since there are many races in the Orient that are very different from one another and yet all "Oriental." But to designate a specific single race of the Orient as the Oriental one is, at the very least, unscientific.

[149]

Only rarely are completely pure representatives of this race found today, even among the Bedouin of the desert lands. On the other hand, it is found not only among the nomadic herders of the steppes but also among the settled peoples of the Orient, especially in Arab cities. But a settled existence inhibits the development of their natural way of life; therefore, these people thrive less well in villages and cities than other Oriental races. In the human character of Arab villages and cities, the traits of another race predominate—a race that is sedentary by nature, even though the land on which it builds means something entirely different to it than to Germanic people. The landscape that forms the stylistic backdrop to the psychological character of this race appears to be to be found in Asia Minor; from there, it first occupied the Near Eastern region of the Orient and from there spread further. We therefore call it the Hither Asiatic race.

Anyone who wanders through the bazaars of Arabic-speaking cities and observes the people will repeatedly find, in the seething racial mix, the traits of these two races: the desert race and the Hither Asiatic race. They are usually blended within each individual; sometimes, however, the two forms still stand out clearly. I remember that one day in the Old City of Jerusalem, I was buying some food and first came across a slender boy who smiled at me like that Bedouin on Plate XXXIII. He offered me the fruit I wanted, haggled with me about the price for a while, and then quickly, it seemed, put the agreed-upon number of fruits into a bag. Then he beamed as he accepted the coin. The radiance of this smile struck me as a little suspicious. I counted the goods I had purchased, and lo and behold: instead of fourteen fruits, there were only eleven. I told him this immediately, without reproach. He laughed and gave me the missing three. Not a trace of shame or even being caught out. A fool once. A small haul escaped. No matter: next time!

But that's not quite the end of the story. I continued down the alley to a shop where a bearded man with a heavy nose was sitting.

[150] He resembled the two upper images in our Plate VII in face and expression. He offered the same merchandise, and I bought from him as

well. Haggling over the price was not a lighthearted game, but a protracted legal battle. He tried to prove to me that the price he was asking was "the right one." But finally, we agreed on the same amount as before. And once again, I received my bag. The merchant reached for a pious book that was always lying around and looked away from me. I counted, and again three pieces of fruit were missing. I informed him of the result of my count without reproach. The merchant first pretended not to hear me, then "proved" to me that he had given me the correct price, and became increasingly vehement in his assertion of his right. I listened calmly to this exercise of subtlety and then said, "Allow me!" With that, I took the three missing pieces of fruit from his table and watched with interest to see what would happen next.

The merchant jumped up, raised both arms, and shouted, "Robbery! Robbery!" Then he seized his pious book, which he held out to me with both hands. I was a little doubtful whether he truly believed his increasingly hurled and panting legal arguments; then I spoke calmly: "O knower of scripture, do not waste your learning on us. For no other knowledge is needed here than the numbers from one to fourteen. And those we know." At this, everyone around us laughed, and I laughed with them. The merchant opened his mouth several times to speak, but he uttered not a word, only a hoarse croak. He stood ramrod straight, his head thrown back so that his beard stood in the air, and clutched the book as I left.

So clearly do these two Oriental races differ, so fundamentally different is their reaction to the "same" event. One of them seems completely at random in this urban alley and in the narrow stone building that serves as his shop. He might not be there the next morning, or perhaps he'll move during the month of Muharram—for no apparent reason, just because. The other, however, settles in wherever he is: the confined area doesn't bother him; he knows how to make use of every corner.

[151] The multifaceted, the tightly curved, the tricky, the intricate – that is his domain. A glance at those two images on Plate VII (above) says enough. This man is a Koranic scholar and lawyer in a Palestinian city. An Arab of Hither Asiatic descent. We would find nearly the same face among Jews almost anywhere in the world. The gaze of these eyes never points directly at its target, but always winds its way through difficulties. To take something simply, calmly, and naturally is alien to him: he must complicate it, exaggerate it, make it tricky before he can grasp it[1].

It is not possible to derive these traits solely from urban life, for firstly, they do not appear in other races under the same external conditions, and secondly, we also find them outside the cities among people of this race, for example, among Arab farmers. The situation is precisely the opposite: because those traits described above are prefigured in the psychological makeup of this race, it is therefore suited to certain forms of urban, i.e., enclosed life: it is capable of living in a specific, unique way, namely, in a ghetto. It easily becomes alienated from all simple, natural life because its nature is not simple, and towards all that is simply alive, it then falls into a persistent mood of discontent, which speaks clearly from Plate XXXV. The picture shows a Jew from the Inner Asian city of Bukhara (Azbekistan); in his appearance, Hither Asiatic features predominate, although traits of other races are also noticeable. The man practices the in itself by no means complicated or subtle craft of a—we would say—master butcher. However, within the context of Hither Asiatic life, it was possible to turn this inherently simple and rough trade into a kind of sophisticated science.

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[1] Perhaps it seems to some viewers of these pictures that we overestimate their expression and pay too little attention to the effect of the bright sun on the eyes: here, it is not the intricate that is essential, but the pinched. I therefore recommend comparing the expression of these images with, for example, images 1 and 2 of my book "Race and Soul": images that were taken in no less glaring light.

[152]

The countenance into which these two images allow us to gaze seems more like that of a scholar, made humanly uncertain by vast knowledge, than that of a craftsman. The Jewish ritual slaughterer (shochet) is not merely a master butcher, but one of the most learned men within the Jewish community: he possesses a multifaceted knowledge of countless, highly complex regulations of church law, according to which animals may and should not be slaughtered, not killed (for "thou shalt not kill"), but only brought from life to death, namely "ritual slaughtered."

However, wherever the character of Hither Asiatic life prevails in a community, all professions, even the simplest trades, tend to acquire a degree of complexity that makes even the "common man" somewhat like the scholar, or rather, the knowledgeable one. To be considered a scholar in this sense can be the ambition of even a porter. “You are a great scholar,” a highly educated Jew says to the old Jewish man from Aleppo, whom the last image (Plate XXXVI, below) presents to us; and the old man strokes his beard with utmost satisfaction, for he knows no higher praise. What is the hero in the realm of warlike races (as a soldier, a bullfighter, or a sportsman, for example), is the knower here. When

men of other races reach for weapons, they reach for “the book” or for a legally and literally certified claim: for “their appearance.” This applies not only to Jews capable of ghettoization, but also to Muslims and sectarians in the Arab cities, insofar as they are of Hither Asiatic race and therefore capable of ghettoization. (The word "ghetto" here is not intended to refer solely to a phenomenon of Jewish history: ghetto-like communities also exist in Arab cities, and without any apparent external coercion.)

"The Book" is at the center of all Hither Asiatic life, and this book claims to timelessly set limits for all life. Life can only unfold within the confines of such unconditional rules, and such a restriction is called spiritualization.

[153] Spiritual creation is possible here only as interpretation. For the statute defines the limit and at the same time contains the sum total of all spirit. Spiritual development, as we understand it, is absurd in the sense of this spirit: the aim is not to develop spirit, but to entangle it, to make it ever more subtle, ever more hostile to life. For the "spirit" of this kind is the adversary of the "flesh."

From this conflict between spirit and flesh springs the species law of this race: it lives from this conflict and lives itself back into it. Although the true path of the species leads it to the side of the spirit and, through "spiritualization," strives for redemption from the flesh, it is in the nature of such experience that redemption is never truly attained, since spirit and flesh resist their separation. Man is "sinful" because he is bound to the flesh; he is "sinful" because of this conflict. This original sin is a Hither Asiatic experience. “Man,” as this race understands him, must walk the path of redemption from sin, but redemption lies in the finite. Every abrupt break is painful in such a life: it must always continue, for where there is an end, there is no more spiritualization, no path to redemption. “Better a living dog than a dead lion[1].”

The Hither Asiatic redemptive man has hardly any trait in common with the desert-dwelling man of revelation, the Arsemite. Yet, in the course of their history, the peoples of Semitic languages have absorbed so much Hither Asiatic blood that today the traits of the redemptive man are harder to imagine being removed from the Semitic world than the traits of the Phalian man of stagnation are from the Germanic world. Where Semitic culture remains essentially desert-like, it remains without history, like the nomadic tribes of the Arabian steppe: whoever lives "in the moment" always remains on one point.

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[1] Ecclesiastes 9:4

[2] Cf. L. F. Clauß, Race and Soul, Section 2: The Persistent Human Being; esp. pp. 42 ff.

[154]

When Semitic life entered into a historical ferment, it did so from urban centers; from those places, therefore, where Hither Asiatic blood also flowed into Semitic life. On our plates XIV, XV, XXXI, XXXII, and XXXVI (top image), we see desert and Hither Asiatic lineages so fused in a single face that it is almost impossible to show in which features one racial law is more pronounced and in which the other. Even the most subtle stylistic analysis can scarcely separate the two lines. If the word "Semitic" is to retain a meaning within racial studies that essentially corresponds to the meaning in which the word is used in historical sciences—in cultural history, especially linguistic history, but also in ethnology—then we must clearly distinguish the meaning of this word from the meaning in which we used the word "proto-Semitic" here. The lifestyle and expression of life can only be considered proto-Semitic of the desert race, whereas we also and especially designate as Semitic that which arises when desert blood is set into historical fermentation by admixtures of Hither Asiatic blood. The Arsemitic must be present in everything that can be called Semitic: it must be, as it were, the fundamental substance without whose disappearance no Semitic life, no Semitic culture is possible—just as Germanic culture is impossible where the Nordic fundamental substance disappears. But from none of the Semitic cultural formations that have influenced our own historical development from the Orient and continue to do so today—we need only think of the history of Western religious life—can the features of the Hither Asiatic redemptive human being be erased. It is something of our own destiny that we face and with which we wrestle when we achieve an understanding of Semitic nature.

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